

# Leaves, Limbs, Needles & Boughs



by Fred D. Opperman

Tree Trivia question — What tree is usually used to make toothpicks?

This month's selection is not being planted too much anymore. Some nurseries aren't even growing it. Yet it makes up a large percentage of the trees on some courses. It was heavily planted during the 60's and 70's when we were losing the American Elm to the Dutch Elm disease.

You guessed it — the Silver Maple, *Acer saccharinum* (a'ser sak-kar-i'-num)

Leaves: Opposite, simple, 3 to 7" across, 5 lobed, the edges of the leaves sharply toothed, pale green and smooth on the upper surface, silvery-white and usually smooth on the lower side, petiole is 3 to 5" long.



Bark: Gray or silvery, smooth at first, becoming loose and scaly or even somewhat shaggy when older.

Buds: More or less rounded, reddish-brown, smooth to finely hairy, up to 1/8 to 3/16 inch long.

Size: Medium to large tree, 50 to 100' in height and with a spread that is 2/3's the height.



Fall Leaf Color: Don't count on much from this tree. Maybe there might be a tinge of red with some trees, usually fall color is a yellowish-brown.

Wood: Hard, close grained and used for furniture.

Culture: Easy to grow, transplants very well in most any soil. Does best in moist soils along creek or lake banks. Does an excellent job of filling up tile lines if roots happen to get into a tile.

Trivia answer: Paper Birch

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