

# Leaves, Limbs, Needles & Boughs



by Fred Opperman

**Tree Trivia:** There are about 850 species of trees in the United States and more species of trees in the Appalachian mountains than in all of Europe. But there are more species of trees in three acres of a Malaysian rain forest than in all of the U.S.

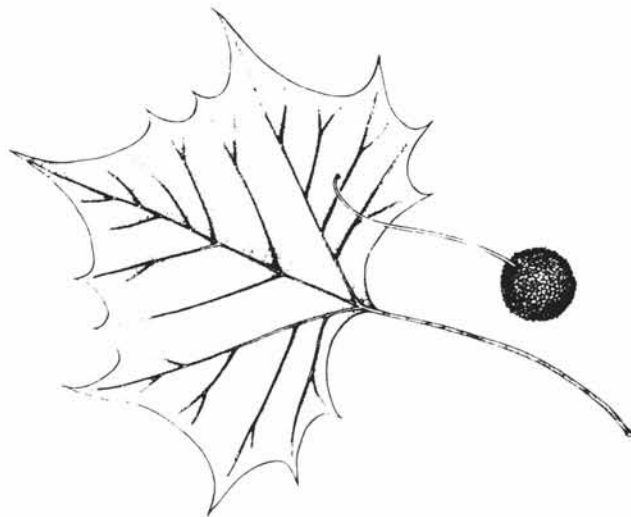
**Sycamore** — *Platanus occidentalis*, is the chosen tree for this month. It is a tree that most golf courses would rather not have due to its litter problem of shedding bark, twigs and large leaves. Most years in this area the tree gets anthracnose which affects the developing leaves and stems. During these years there is a die back and “witches broom” is the result of this disease.

**Bark:** Reddish-brown when young, quickly breaking into thin flat scales that tend to flake off through out the year. The flaking off then reveal large patches of whitish or greenish inner bark. A mature tree is very striking with its mottled bark.

**Twigs:** Smooth, light brown, somewhat in a zigzag shape. Leaf scars are alternate, encircling the buds with 5-7 bundle traces.



**Leaves:** Alternate, simple, blades circular in outline, divided into 3 or 5 shallow sharp pointed lobes. Leaves up to 7 inches long and 4-6 inches wide.



**Fruit:** Round light brown heads, about 1 inch in diameter on long drooping stems. The balls contain many small seeds surrounded by hairs.

**Habitat:** Bottomlands, along stream banks and lakes. Likes deep moist rich soil.

**Wood:** Hard and strong and is used for furniture.

**Credit:** “Forest Trees of Illinois”

## Take a Load Off Of Your Back

Most of you are aware that there is a right way and wrong way to lift something. However, back injuries and hernia continue to be a major problem — possibly because these injuries often occur over long periods of improper lifting. For example, workers might not feel immediate pain over one box lifted incorrectly, but after lifting many boxes incorrectly for days, months and even years, the chance of injury multiplies.

Here are some steps for minimizing your risk while lifting and carrying heavy or awkward items. *If you are experiencing back pain or hernia, refrain from lifting heavy objects.*

1. Before lifting the object, look it over to determine if you can lift it alone, or if you should have someone help you. A good rule of thumb is: When in doubt, get help! If the item is in a package or box, be sure that the box is stable and sealed. Falling items often land on the feet of the person lifting.

2. Look over the area where you're going to be carrying the object to make sure it's clear of obstacles. Be sure to check for, and avoid, slick or wet surfaces.

3. Get a good footing close to the load to be lifted. Place your feet 8 to 12 inches apart.

4. While keeping your back straight, bend your knees to grasp the load. Bend your knees outward and straddle the load somewhat.

5. Get a firm grip on the load. If you have to handle the load awkwardly, then it isn't ready to lift. (For example, if you need to wrap your arm underneath the load so contained materials don't fall out, secure the load first. See item 1.)

6. Remember, you want to keep the load close to your body as you lift and carry.

7. Lift carefully and smoothly by straightening your legs.

Do not jerk the load up, since the weight could suddenly transfer from your legs to your back.

8. If you are carrying the load in areas of pedestrian traffic, be sure to give vocal warning that you are approaching. This will ensure that fellow workers will not bump into you. If you are walking around corners and blind spots, be sure to make wide turns so you can see someone coming into your path.

9. Use your feet to change your direction. Do not twist your body, as this will shift the burden of the weight to your back.

10. When you reach your destination and are ready to set the load down, simply reverse the lifting steps. Keep your back straight and the load close to your body. Slowly bend your knees. Watch your fingers as you set the load down. If you are setting a load down onto a raised surface such as a table or bench, set the object just over the edge and slide the rest of the load onto the surface.

### Lifting Above the Waist

If you are lifting an item above the waist:

- First, follow proper lifting procedures.

- Rest the load on a firm object for support, change your grip and once again bend your knees to get extra leg muscle into the final effort.

- Never attempt to change your grip or the position of your load while you are moving.

Your back is a very important part of your body, but it's easy to forget that you have one until you injure it. Practice these safety tips and keep your back and body operating comfortably.

**CREDIT:** California Fairways