

---

## London Planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*)

Alex X. Niemiera, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture

### Summary:

Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf

Height: 100 feet

Spread: 80 feet

Shape: Pyramidal in youth, spreading with age

London planetree is a medium/large species that is very tolerant of adverse conditions. It has ornamental which bark flakes off, exposing tan, greenish and creamy white colors.

### Plant Needs:

Zone: 5 to 8

Light: Partial shade to full sun

Moisture: Wet to moist to dry

Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

pH Range: 3.7 to 8.2

### Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include shade, street tree, and specimen plant.

### Planting Notes:

Transplants readily.

Tolerates wide range of conditions, including air pollution.

Plant in a location that will allow the plant ample room to spread. Do not plant where branches will interfere with power lines.

### Care:

Bark and leaves continuously drop off, causing litter.

Tolerates heavy pruning. Prune in the winter.

### Problems:

Some problems include cankerstain, anthracnose, lacebug, and frost cracking of the bark.

There are cultivars that exhibit pest resistance. Roots of this species can heave sidewalks. This species is relatively messy due to leaf and fruit litter.

### Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Cultivars of *Platanus x acerifolia*:

'Bloodgood' 'Columbia' and 'Liberty' are reported to be resistant to anthracnose, however, there are conflicting reports on this aspect.

American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) is a large tree that is best suited to parks or natural areas. It can tolerate wet soils.

### Comments:

The most striking feature of the London planetree is its flaking bark that peels to reveal a lighter colored bark underneath. This species is noted for its tolerance to adverse conditions. Best used only in open areas where its growth will not be restricted.

*This material was developed by Carol Ness as part of the Interactive Design and Development Project funded by the Kellogg Foundation.*