

# *Acer opalus*
# Italian Maple



*Acer opalus* (Italian Maple) grows in the hills and mountains, from the south of Europe down to Northern Africa. Related trees are the *Acer monspessulanum*, *Prunus mahaleb*, *Quercus pubescens* and *Laburnum anagyroides*. The Italian maple is naturally multi-stemmed, but is still quite an impressive tree-forming variety - with an ovoid crown reaching heights of up to 15 metres - and can thus also easily be planted as a standard tree.

A striking quality of the *Acer opalus* is its blooms. In late April, early May, even before the leaves appear, the tree blooms short, yellow, hanging umbels in corymbs. After it blooms, winged samaras appear, in racemes of two each. In cultivation, this seed is often sterile, meaning that it does not sprout. It has sinuate, obtuse lobate leaves that are hairy at a young age, and which bud red in spring, after which they turn a glossy dark green with a blue-green underside and in autumn, the Italian maple's leaves turn a surprisingly beautiful orange-red to golden yellow. In its early stages, the *Acer opalus* has grey, smooth bark that turns darker and peels off in small sheets later on.

*Acer opalus* is an excellent candidate for cities, as this maple prefers warm, sheltered microclimates. It's a beautiful species for central reservations, parks or gardens that could be used much more. Furthermore, the Italian maple can withstand heat and drought very well. That also makes it perfect for use in tree planters. *Acer opalus* prefers an environment with sun to partial shade in moist soil, which can be poor to moderately nutrient-rich.

**TYPES OF PLANTING**

**Tree types**: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, climate trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

**USE**

**Location**: park, central reservation, in containers, large garden, cemetery, countryside, ecological zone | **Pavement**: none, open | **Planting concepts**: Climate planting, Eco planting, Landscape planting, urban planting

**CHARACTERISTICS**

**Crown shape**: egg-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 10 - 15 m | **Width**: 5 - 10 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 5A - 8B

**ASPECTS**

**Wind**: intolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, butterflies, nectar value 5, pollen value 5 | **Extreme environments**: tolerant to dryness, tolerates heat

**PLANTKENMERKEN**

**Flowers**: umbels, corymbose, striking, pendulous, big | **Flower colour**: bright yellow | **Flowering period**: April - May | **Leaf colour**: buds red, dark green, underside blue-green | **Leaves**: deciduous, palmate, opposite, leathery , polished, undulate, lobate | **Autumn colour**: golden yellow, orange-red | **Fruits**: striking, winged, large | **Fruit colour**: brown | **Bark colour**: grey | **Bark**: peeling, smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour**: olive green | **Twigs**: bare, polished | **Root system**: shallow, fine roots

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