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Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*), Nebraska Forest Service

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Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*)

Nebraska Forest Service

Fall is Nebraska's most consistent season and one that just begs for a drive in the country. The contrasting colors created by the fields of crops, ready for harvest, against the beauty of the fall coloration of trees is a site to remember. Even in the driest years, the colors always seem to put a nice end on the summer months.



Foresters are often asked what tree produces the best fall color. The answer is that all trees produce nice fall color, it is more a matter of what you want or what you envision as “nice color.” Red seems to be the most popular color and that’s not just because of a football team. Unfortunately, Nebraska is not known for red fall colors but there is one tree that can be planted in the landscape as well as in the field or windbreak that will produce some outstanding reds and it is the Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*). Amur maple is a smaller tree usually growing to a height of 30 or 35 feet. It is a spreading tree so it will require some room to grow. Amur maple was introduced into the United States in the mid 1800’s. It is native to Central and northern China, Manchuria, and Japan.

Amur maple is very similar to the larger crabapples in size and is also a very tough tree. It can withstand the rigors of weather in Nebraska. Some good examples can be seen on the drive from Omaha to Lincoln along I-80. Watch for the brightest red color. The tree is not very noticeable during the summer but in the fall the red foliage stands out. If amur maple can withstand conditions that exist along the interstate, then it has to do well in your landscape.



The leaves of amur maple are narrow and shaped kind of like the point of a lance, which is where the scientific name “ginnala” came from. In the spring the tree flowers with a small and yet fragrant cream-colored flower. Summer leaves are dark green and the fruit (a winged seed) has a nice red color. In the fall the tree turns anywhere from a deep yellow or gold to a brilliant red. There are specific selections of amur maple that produce more consistent red color. The variety “flame” is very popular. There are also several other varieties that are “dwarf” and

can be planted in smaller spaces for a more formal look.

The tree likes moist, well-drained soils but is very adaptable to almost any kind of condition. Chlorosis (yellowing of the leaves) can be an issue on some sites and the tree is susceptible to verticillium wilt, which can kill single branches or the entire tree. These disease problems are not common.