

TREES 'N' TRAITS: MAPLE – “VIVACITY”

Neil Baldwin

This ongoing inquiry into whether particular tree species may personify some of your traits (or perhaps traits you desire!) is winding down to its second-last installment. As you walk your favourite woodlands of Grey-Bruce this month, what a great time to consider how you closely Maples embody your essence.

There are “hard maples” – Sugar and Black (the latter generally found south of Grey-Bruce); and “soft maples” – such as Red and Silver. In some parts of our region you may see Mountain, Striped and Manitoba Maples, as well as the naturalized Norway Maple with a leaf shape similar to the Sugar Maple.

Sugar Maples, clearly, are beautiful, showy and colourful. And even though at their most luminous in autumn, they are a lively presence in the forest throughout spring and summer with bold, bright and distinctly identifiable leaves. They are also very sweet. Their sap, with 2-6% sugar content, is what the glorious syrup we use in many ways is distilled from.

Maples tend to be quite light-sensitive. This is most obvious in how their leaves change colour but it is also interesting to

observe how leaf stalks bend and twist to position themselves upright for best exposure to light. Also, maple leaves attached to the underside of a branch will often have longer stalks and larger blades than those on the upper side. Despite being moderately shade tolerant, Maples need good light and will orient themselves to get the most of it.

Are you a “showy” Maple personality – the type of person who may stand out from the crowd and get attention? Do people tend to see you as a colourful life-force? Do you get “tapped” by others for your sweet smile, vibrant personality and cheerful demeanour? If so, perhaps you are a Maple.

Just as Maple trees are quite sensitive to light, people with a Maple temperament are also quite energy aware. They are able to intuitively sense positive (and negative) energy in others, and are apt to be affected by those energies around them. If you are a Maple, you may also have the ability to change your form somewhat to best harness the energies around you.

It's no coincidence Maples are the focus in the October installment of this series. I ordinarily wrap up each article with suggested local sites to get up close and personal with



Photo by: Shelley Jackson

“your tree” but when it comes to Maples this time of year, they will be making themselves obvious in pretty much every hardwood forest. Also consider this: Maples are at their most beautiful when looking at the forest from beyond. The splendour may be less obvious from within. Life can be like that sometimes too. Next Month: Spruce

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