

QA1094

Dale, I enjoy reading your articles in the newspaper. I am looking to add some trees with some fall color in my back yard. I have an area and considering some maple trees with a chance of some red or yellow coloring in the fall. The yard already has some red oaks. I have heard of some Bigtooth Maple trees that grow well in the hill country, will they do well in the Grand Saline area? Or do you have any recommendations? - M. S.

Good question. Here's some information on Bigtooth Maple directly from the Native Plants database. It's part of the aggie horticulture site at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/natives/acergrandidentatum.htm>

Bigtooth Maple *Acer grandidentatum* is also known as Bigtooth Maple, Sabinal Maple, Western Sugar Maple, Uvalde Bigtooth Maple, Canyon Maple, Southwestern Bigtooth Maple

Bigtooth maple is one of the most attractive and interesting Texas trees. Native to the sheltered canyons of the Edwards Plateau (these are the maples of Lost Maples State Park), the Lampasas Cut Plains and the high country of the Trans-Pecos, it is a small tree up to 50 feet tall. It grows in limestone and igneous soils and is relatively drought tolerant. Mature trees have beautiful red and yellow fall color. The trees in the Edwards Plateau are found in two confusing forms: *A. grandidentatum* var. *grandidentatum* (bigtooth maple), which has three- to five-lobed, toothed leaves, and var. *sinuosum* (Uvalde bigtooth maple), whose toothless leaves are three-lobed. However, both types of leaves can sometimes be found on the same tree.

**Plant Habit or Use:** small tree medium tree

**Exposure:** sun partial sun

**Flower Color:** yellow

**Blooming Period:** spring

**Fruit Characteristics:** 2-winged samara, green or slightly reddish with a brown wing

**Height:** to 50 ft.

**Width:** to 40 ft.

**Plant Character:** deciduous

**Heat Tolerance:** high

**Water Requirements:** medium low

**Soil Requirements:** alkaline adaptable

**USDA Hardiness Zone:** 5

This beauty should do very well for you in your location. Do make sure the location is well drained. Maples do not like wet feet.

A second maple you may want to take a look at is a Texas Superstar Plant, Shantung Maple *Acer truncatum*

Reminiscent of Japanese maple but with much greater toughness. This beautiful maple has spreading canopy with attractive foliage that turns spectacular red, red-orange in late fall. Tolerates heat and alkaline soils. Makes wonderful shade tree for smaller yards.

**Hardiness:** [Zone 6](#)

**Exposure:** Full sun to part shade.

**Size:** Height 25 feet tall, 20 feet wide

**Care:** Not adapted to far west Texas. Wrap trunk first three years to prevent sunscald.

This information is available at <http://texassuperstar.com/plants.html>

I will also add Chinese Pistache *Pistacia chinensis* to the list of easy to grow trees with great fall color. This and more tree information is available at <http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu/hort/> then click on Deciduous Trees

Chinese Pistache

Height - 20-40' and Width 20-30'

Low, umbrella-like crowned tree with Moderate growth rate.

Leaf color during the growing season is medium to dark green above, lighter below. Fall Color is spectacular, rivaling sugar maples, orange to orange-red.

Its flowers are not showy. Fruits/seeds are small (1/4" or less), green turning purple red in fall.

Trunk color is tan to gray brown. Sometimes salmon-colored when old bark sloughs off.

Exposure is full sun.

Does best in deep, well drained soil, but adaptable to wide range including most urban conditions.

Very drought resistant/tolerant once established. A WATER WISE tree.

USDA Hardiness Zone 6

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist and Master Gardener Program Coordinator-Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System, Native Texan, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom(tm). To send Dale a question on any Horticulture question send it to [dalegroom@mycvc.net](mailto:dalegroom@mycvc.net). To speak directly with a Master Gardener for free help M - F., 8:30am - 4:pm dial 214-904-3053.

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