

## **Trees of Distinction**

**A Walking Introductory Tour  
to the Trees of Cedarburg**

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## Introduction

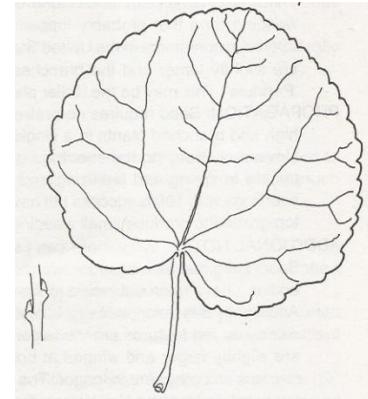
Cedarburg literally means "City of Cedars." While numerous White Cedars, otherwise known as American Arborvitae, grow well and are found in the city, many other trees grace the landscape as well. Cedarburg prides itself on having a wide diversity of trees and in doing their best to keep our urban forest in the best condition possible.

On this 1 1/4 mile walking tour, which begins and ends at city hall, you will travel past many of the buildings that make Cedarburg a unique and historic town. Though many of the buildings in the downtown area are over 150 years old, some of the trees on this tour predate settlement of the city. Others are younger and less often seen in the landscape, but excellent trees nonetheless and would make worthwhile additions to your personal landscape. This tour will introduce you to 15 of the many tree species found within the borders of Cedarburg.

This booklet is prepared by members of *Cedarburg Green*, a tax-exempt organization dedicated to assisting the city in maintaining and funding Cedarburg's trees and green space. Established in 2012, *Cedarburg Green* is composed entirely of volunteers. If you would like to get involved and help keep Cedarburg green, contact the forestry department at Cedarburg City Hall.

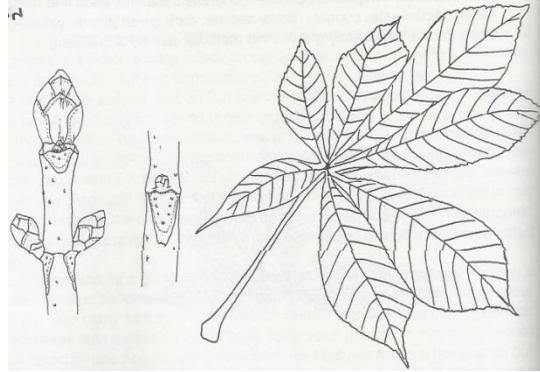
## The Tour

Start by walking around to the front (East) side of City Hall. On the southeast side is a tree that is rarely seen but performs well in our area. Native to Japan and China is the Katsuratree, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* (1). Katsuratree requires ample moisture during the establishment period, but once well rooted grows at a rapid rate. New leaves emerge a beautiful reddish purple and gradually change to bluish green in summer. Fall color is a nice clear yellow. This little-known tree is problem free and deserves to be used more in the landscape.



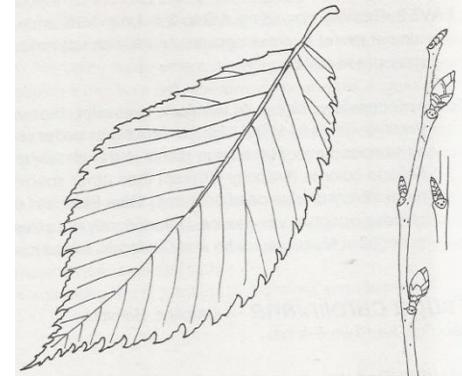
Just east of the Katsuratree is a specimen of Horsechestnut, *Aesculus hippocastanum* (2). A native of Greece and Albania, horsechestnut was brought to the US by European immigrants in 1576. Though you may think that it is related to the American native chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) because of the common name, it is in a family of its own. Notice the leaflets which meet at a central point. This is what is referred to as palmately compound, which is rather unusual among Midwest trees. The nuts produced by

horsechestnut are not edible to humans but provide food for squirrels and deer.



Even though the flowers are some of the most beautiful seen on large trees, this tree is not highly recommended for landscape use because of the messy nuts and foliage which is prone to leaf blotch and scald. If you use it, it is better to admire it from a distance rather than use it as a street or front yard tree.

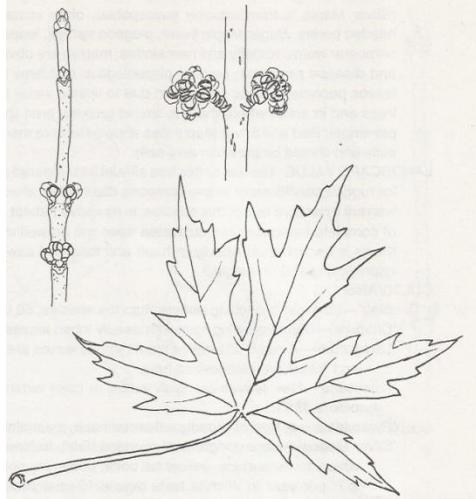
Walking north to the other side of the city hall lot is a large American Elm, *Ulmus americana* (3). Some people are surprised to see large specimens of American Elm in Cedarburg, for most of the elm population was wiped out by Dutch Elm Disease in the 1960's and 70's. Some have escaped the fungus, however, and those on city property are being treated yearly with a fungicide to help prevent attack by the deadly pathogen. This tree, which once dominated urban streets and rural woodlots, is now a rarity.



American elm is a tall, vase-shaped tree. Its branches are up and out of the way but cast a cooling shade over a large area. For this reason, and its tolerance of urban soils, it was widely used as a street tree. The leaves are rough to the touch and have a coarsely toothed margin. They may take on an attractive golden yellow color in the fall.

Elms have a long, deep history in America. George Washington's diary shows that he was constantly searching the bottom lands along the Potomac for wild elms to transplant to the grounds of Mount Vernon. Abraham Lincoln also planted many elms on the White House grounds in Washington, D.C. and in his native Illinois. Because of the introduction of elms resistant to the disease, we too can once again plant this urban tolerant tree. Though it is not recommended that we plant it to the exclusion of other trees, we again see young trees developing on the streets of Cedarburg.

Now walk north on Washington Avenue to W63N671. The large tree west of the sidewalk is Silver Maple, *Acer saccharinum* (4). Silver, or soft, maple is a very large fast growing tree most known for its helicopter-like fruit in the spring. Though it has few redeeming qualities, it is often found in landscapes because of its "instant shade" and ease of propagation from seed. If you or your neighbors have a silver maple in their yard, I'm sure you are well aware of its germination capabilities!

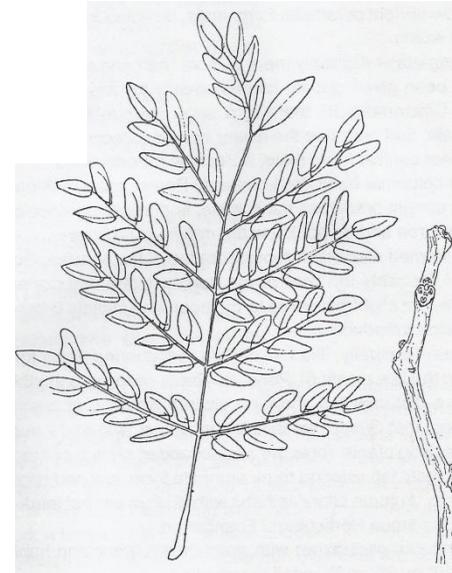


The deeply lobed leaves are medium green on the top side and silvery beneath, from which it gets its common name. Fall color is at best a dirty yellow. There are far too many superior trees available to warrant extensive use of this species, including hybrids between silver and the closely related red maple. One of these hybrids, 'Autumn Blaze,' has the rapid growth rate and soil tolerance of silver maple and the superior fall color and branching structure of red maple. It is a far better tree than either of its parents and does very well in the Cedarburg area.

Continue north on Washington and cross to the east side of the street at Sheboygan Rd. Along the fence of the settlement parking lot is Thornless Honeylocust, *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* (5). In the wild, honeylocust has long sharp thorns, but seedless and thornless selections have been made which are very useful as street and shade trees. The tiny leaflets cast a dappled shade in the summer and then disappear graciously in the fall. No raking or leaf pick-up is required with this tree!

Honeylocust may grow anywhere from 30 to 70 feet tall, depending on its genetic capability and cultivar selection. It withstands a wide range of conditions although it does

best on rich, moist soils. I have even seen it survive on arid soils with very little room for its roots to spread. Overuse of this tree may encourage pest problems, but it is a fine addition to the urban landscape when mixed with other trees. Leaves usually fall early, but may attain a nice yellow prior to doing so.



Continue on Sheboygan Avenue to W63N750. Next to the sidewalk is the namesake of Cedarburg, White Cedar, *Thuja occidentalis* (6). Cedarburg is "the Village of Cedars," and the most common cedar found in this area is White cedar, or American Arborvitae. White cedar surrounds the Great Lakes and spreads up into Canada from Minnesota to Maine. The evergreen foliage is scale-like, arranged in flattened branches and is highly aromatic. It usually has several major trunks emerging from the ground and attains a pyramidal form. It is highly ornamental, and was probably the first tree of North America to be introduced into cultivation in Europe.

American Arborvitae was an important plant in the culture of the Ojibwa, or Chippewa, Indians. It was considered sacred because of its many uses, including the framework for watercraft, and had many medicinal uses. The foliage of *Thuja occidentalis* is

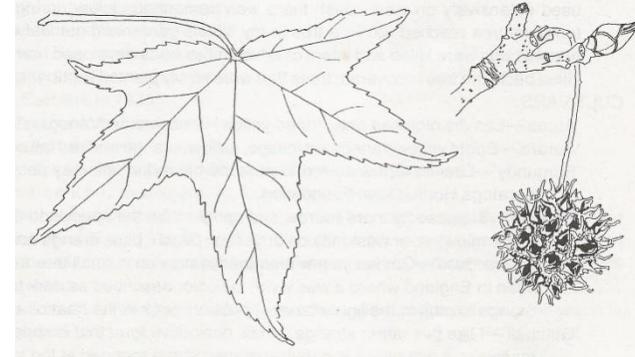
rich in Vitamin C and is believed to be the annedda which cured the scurvy of Jacques Cartier and his party in the winter of 1535–1536. It has also been used in the relief of muscular aches and pains, chronic coughs, fevers, for the removal of warts and fungous growths, and in the prevention of rheumatism



American Arborvitae is easy to grow in full sun or part shade. Use it as a screening plant or trim it into a hedge. Though it prefers moist soils, once established it tolerates considerable drought.

Northern white cedar is commercially used for rustic fencing and posts, lumber, poles, shingles and in the construction of log cabins. Though not a heavy strong wood, the oils of its fibers make it highly resistant to decay and give it an exceptionally long life. An excellent plant to be the namesake of Cedarburg.

Cross Sheboygan and continue northeast to W63N765. Here you will find the largest Sweetgum, (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) (7) in Cedarburg. Star-shaped leaves and golf ball-sized fruit clusters distinguish this native of the central and southern US. Usually it is not found in Wisconsin, but hardier strains do exist and this specimen has thrived in Cedarburg for quite some time. Sweetgum forms a pyramidal tree when young and opens up with age, but almost always has a fine, straight central leader. The leaves have exceptional fall color. Crush a leaf in your hand and take a whiff of it. The pungent odor resembles that of turpentine.

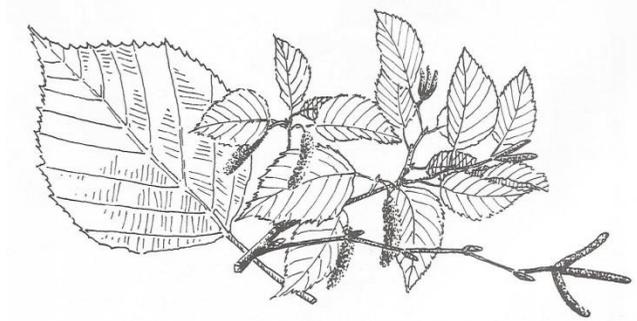


Sweetgum is an excellent lawn or street tree but needs a large area for root development. It prefers full sun and a slightly acidic soil. Lumbermen refer to *Liquidambar* as the Gum Tree, and the heartwood as Red Gum. The sap has been used for the treatment of sores and skin troubles, for a chewing gum, and in the treatment of dysentery was favored by doctors in the Confederate armies.

Sweetgum is second to none in fall splendor. If you wish to plant this tree, be sure to obtain it from a northern source so it will survive our harsh Wisconsin winters.

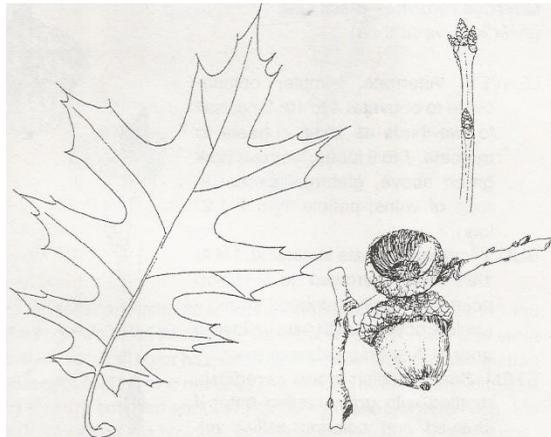
Now head back toward Washington and stop at W63N747 Sheboygan Rd. The easily identifiable tree with white bark is Paper Birch, *Betula papyrifera* (8). Native to our state on cool, moist soils, it can grow to heights of 50 feet or more in wooded areas. Compared to other forest trees, it tends to be short-lived, rarely exceeding 50 years.

The bark of paper birch is very resistant to decay. Native Americans covered their huts and wigwams with the bark and rolled it into a horn for a moose call. Canoes were constructed from a variety of trees, all native to the Northeastern sections of the US. Frames consisted of white cedar and were covered with birch bark which was sewn together with the roots of tamarack and white spruce. Seams were calked with pine or balsam fir resin. The result was a light weight, yet durable product.



Besides the white bark, paper birch is noted for its golden autumn foliage color. Keep the shallow root system moist and it will give you many years of pleasure.

Continue back to Washington and cross at Elm Street. South of the house at W64N727 Washington is a fine specimen of Red Oak, *Quercus rubra* (9). Oaks have long been considered to be some of the most precious woods of commerce. They are recognized for their ingrained beauty when used in furniture and interior finish, for durability when used for flooring, and for strength in construction. About one-third of the hardwood saw timber in the United States is oak.

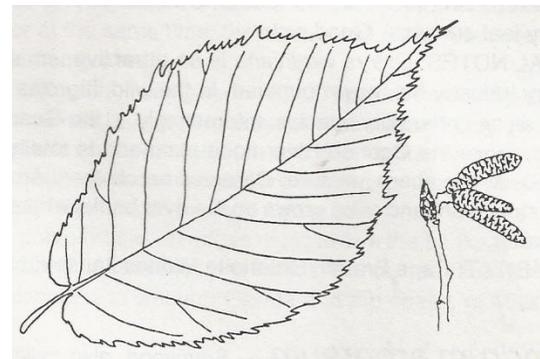


Over 300 species of oak constitute the genus *Quercus*. Most are long-lived, large picturesque trees, although some shrubby species do exist. They range from the tropics to the frigid north. Nine of the 55 species native to the US are found in Wisconsin.

Perhaps the most practical oak for landscape use is the Red Oak. It is identified by pointed lobes on its leaves with sinuses that extend less than half way to the midrib. Its form is upright and spreading. Unlike some oaks that mature slowly, red oak grows at a moderate rate. In the fall, the leaves may take on a fine red color.

Red oak makes an excellent furniture wood but, unlike white oak (*Quercus alba*) is not used to make barrels for aging wine and spirits. This is because the pores of red oak are not filled with gum, as they are in white oak. Red oak is an excellent urban tree, tolerant of difficult soil conditions and pollution. Plant a red oak for yourself and for generations to come.

Now walk north on Washington to W65N769. The multi-stemmed tree is Ironwood, otherwise known as Hophornbeam, *Ostrya virginiana* (10). Ironwood is an appropriate name for this tree, for the wood is very heavy and extremely hard. Few have ever heard of this tree, though, for it melts into the summer woodlot, and is overpowered by its taller neighbors. However, it has two features that make it easily identifiable. The first is the fruit cluster which resembles hops. The small nuts are enclosed in little papery bags. The second distinguishing feature is the bark, which exfoliates in thin, vertical strips.



Ironwood is smaller than most Wisconsin forest trees, topping out at 40 feet or less, which makes it useful in smaller urban or wooded areas. Ostrya does well in your backyard, or along a street, in full sun or under taller trees. It is closely related to the birches, and in the winter has birch-like catkins at the ends of the branches.

Though Ironwood is an overlooked tree, in the woods or as an ornamental, its beauty is subtle. The soft, elm-like leaves turn a dull gold in the fall. In the summer, they block out most of the sun's heat, but only a little of the light. It is slow to establish, but long-lived and deserves a place in your yard.

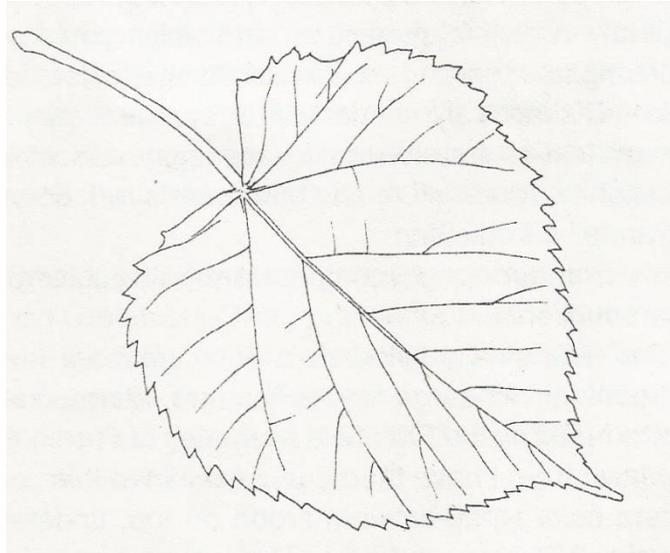
Next door at W65N759 St. John is a large conifer known as Norway spruce, *Picea abies* (11). Many large Norway spruces grace the landscapes of Cedarburg homes, for it is well adapted to our area. Unlike the common Colorado spruce, the deep green needles of Norway spruce are relatively non-prickly. As a Norway spruce matures, the branches droop, resulting in almost a weeping appearance. Cones of this plant are the longest of the spruces, usually over 6 inches long.



Because of its large size, Norway spruce is most useful in open, rural landscapes, often used as a windbreak. However, many dwarf cultivars are available which work well in the smaller, urban yard. Included in this group is the commonly found Bird's Nest spruce, *Picea abies* 'Nidiformis,' which matures at a manageable size of 4 feet tall and 5 feet wide.

When planting a Norway spruce, be aware of its mature size, for that cute small plant will take over your planting site before you know it.

Continue walking south on St. John and cross to the other side of the street at Walnut Street to W65N738 St. John. The large tree along the street is Basswood, *Tilia americana* (12). The large, asymmetric, heart-shaped leaves make basswood easy to identify in the urban forest. But it's the sweet fragrance of the creamy white flowers that really help you to notice this tree. It is said that honey made by bees who frequent this tree is of the highest quality.



Basswood grows to be a tall tree, often over 100 feet in the northern forests. Though not exceptionally tolerant of urban conditions, it is sometimes used as a street tree; however, its European counterpart, *Tilia cordata*, is used more often. Woodcarvers are familiar with basswood for its soft, easy to carve wood. It has often been used for crates and boxes. Because of its lack of distinctive grain or color, it is rarely used for furniture.

Few basswoods are currently being planted on the streets of Cedarburg because of the abundance of more adaptable urban trees. But it is a fine backyard tree, and mixes well with other specimens in the urban forest.

Continue south on St. John and walk around the corner of Elm Street. Along the street are two magnificent specimens of Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra* (13). Black walnut is prized for its edible nuts and valuable timber. In fact, the wood of black walnut is one of the most expensive cabinet-making woods in the US. Pioneers recognized this quality and exported walnut to England as early as 1610.

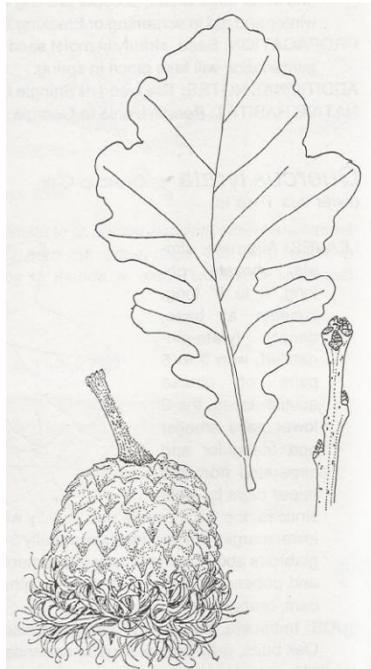


During the mid-1800's walnut wood was used to make waterwheels and charcoal for gunpowder. Oil extracted from the nuts was used in hair oil and as butter. A dye derived from the husks was used to color wood, cloth, and human hair. Some people still believe that carrying a walnut will prevent rheumatism.

Walnuts, and its close relative Butternut, both of which are native to Ozaukee County, contain a substance called juglone, which is toxic to certain landscape plants and vegetables. Plants sensitive to juglone wilt or are stunted when the roots of a *Juglans* comes near them. Examples of plants which are especially sensitive are tomatoes, peppers,, blueberries, apples, petunias, and lilacs.

Walnuts are large trees, often exceeding 100 feet in wooded areas. The leaves are described as pinnately compound, with leaflets originating along a central stalk. Though the nuts may be messy, and for this reason works better in the backyard than the front, this tree is a valuable addition to our urban forest.

Take a short walk south on St. John and turn left on Cleveland and then right on Hanover Avenue. Along the street behind city hall are several specimens of Honeylocust (5) that was described earlier. Turn left on Turner Street, walking toward Washington Avenue. In the lot at N61W6321 Turner Street is a broad spreading Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa* (14). Bur Oak is one of the largest of all the oaks. It is the most drought tolerant of the oaks, yet is commonly found on moist sites. Bur oak once dominated the area between the Eastern forests and the Western prairies. They were widely spaced, competing only amongst themselves and short grasses.

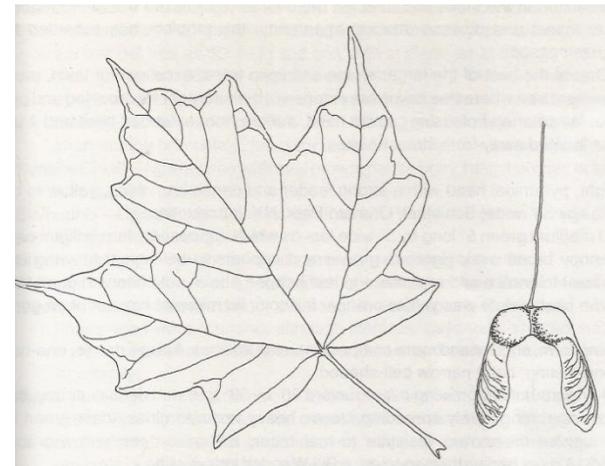


Bur oak produces a deep taproot, making it difficult to transplant. Growth rate depends on the condition of the soil, but is usually considered fairly slow to mature. The tree is long-lived, often surviving to the ripe old age of 400 years. It usually doesn't produce acorns until it is about 35 years old. Optimum seed production is from 75 to 100 years.

Unlike red oak, the lobes of bur oak leaves are rounded at the tips. It is usually broad near the tip, but narrow toward the base of the leaf. The bark of bur oak will develop deep ridges, making it very attractive as it ages. In an open area, bur oak will spread greater distances than it achieves in height.

Though bur oak does not develop the fine fall color of red oak, it is a strong tree that will last for generations.

Now walk north on Washington and note the tree at W63N631 Washington. This is the state tree of Wisconsin, Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) (15). Sugar maple is one of the most common trees in the Eastern deciduous forest and was named the state tree of Wisconsin in 1949. Though not one of the best street trees, it is often used there because of its popularity and autumn foliage color. Not tolerant of difficult urban sites, it much prefers the loamy soil and expansive root area of your back yard or woodlot. Identify the sugar maple by its 5-lobed leaves and oval form.



Few trees can match the autumn brilliance of a sugar maple. In October it paints the landscape with yellow, orange, and red. Though not fast growing, in a forest situation it can achieve heights of 100 feet or more and live to be 300 to 400 years old. In an urban setting, 50 to 70 feet tall is more common.

The wood of sugar maple is strong and durable, hence another common name, hard maple. Maple is the preferred wood for basketball courts and other types of flooring. Bird's eye maple and curly maple are names given to sugar maple wood that contains fancy grains. These are highly sought after by cabinet makers for fine furniture. Curly maple has long been used for the backs of fine violins. The density of sugar maple also makes it an excellent source of fuel. Only hickory outranks it in the btu's available from a cord of wood.

Sugar maple is one of the best large lawn trees. Enjoy it now and for generations to come.

There are many more Trees of Distinction in Cedarburg. Take a leisurely walk and enjoy the view!

