Plant Data Sheet: Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)

Range

Vine maple ranges from southwest British Columbia to northern California [4]. It is found from the eastern slopes of the Cascades to the coast.

Climate, elevation

Vine maple is found from sea level to 1400 meters in elevation and prefers the climate found west of the Cascades [4].

Local occurrence

Vine maple is a common plant in the Pacific Northwest. It is common component of coniferous forest understory and is highly shade tolerant. However, it is also found frequently along stream banks, alluvial terraces, forest openings, clear cuts, talus slopes, and other open locations [4].

Habitat preferences

Vine maple prefers rich, moist, well-drained soils. It thrives in shade or in open areas such as those listed above.

Plant strategy type/successional stage

Vine maple is found in the understory of both early and late successional forests.

Associated species

Companion species to vine maple vary due to its wide variety of habitats. They may include: Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Pacific silver fir (*Abies amabilis*), red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*), oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), rhododendrons (*Rhododendron* spp.), huckleberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*), Oregon grape (*Mahonia nervosa*), salal (*Gautheria shalon*), foamflower (*Tiarella trifoliata*), twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), and bear-grass (*Xerophyllum tenax*) [1].

May be collected as: (seed, layered, divisions, etc.)

As a poor seed producer, vine maple reproduces frequently through vegetative means in the wild. It may be

propagated through seed, layering, or by collecting seedlings around parent shrubs [4].

Collection restrictions or guidelines

Generally, individuals over the age of ten produce seed. The seeds can be collected by hand or by shaking the tree. Collection should be done in September or October as the samaras begin to dry [2,3,4].

Seed germination

The seeds require a warm, moist stratification at 20-30°C for 30-60 days, then a cold stratification at 3°C for 90-180 days. For best results, the seed should then be planted in trays and covered with leaf mulch. They can be stored indoors or outdoors and will germinate in the spring. The seedlings can be transplanted after one year [1,4].

Seed life

Information on seed life was not available.

Recommended seed storage conditions

Information on seed storage was not available.

Propagation recommendations

Seed production in this species is not naturally high. In addition, seeds may be difficult to germinate. However, the only other propagation method available is branch layering of existing trees [3]. Thus, the collection and propagation of seed may be the only practical method in some situations.

Soil or medium requirements

Unimproved garden soil is sufficient for vine maple propagation. A layer of leaf mulch is recommended [2].

Installation form

Vine maple can be transplanted after a year or two of growth. They can also be installed as bare root material in the winter [1].

Recommended planting density

Plants should be installed with a spacing of 3-5 feet on center, depending on the desired final density and estimated survival [5].

Care requirements after installed

Seedlings should be watered sparingly for the first summer after germination. After planting out, young seedlings should be watered only when necessary [2].

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan

Vine maple is a long-lived deciduous shrub or small tree. It may reach heights of up to 15 meters [4].

Sources cited

(1) Hansen, W. Native Plants of the Northwest. http://www.nwplants.com. Retrieved April 15, 2003.
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(3) Leigh, M. (1999). Grow Your Own Native Landscape: A guide to identification, propagation, and

landscaping with western Washington native plants. Washington State University Cooperative Extension.
(4) Rose, R. et al (1998). Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press.
(5) Sound Native Plants. http://www.soundnativeplants.com. Retrieved April 15, 2003.

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