

## Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 92

# The Comfort Maple

### Introduction

The road leading to the Comfort Maple isn't very impressive. It's a simple, one-lane, bumpy dirt path. The tree, however, is another story.

Standing majestically at nearly 100 feet with a trunk circumference of almost 20 feet, the Comfort Maple is truly a symbol of Canadian strength and tradition, bringing thousands of people to see it from all over the country.

### History

Named for the Comfort family, which purchased the plot of land in 1816, the Comfort Maple is believed to be over 500 years old. This would make it Canada's oldest sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*).

Located in North Pelham, part of the Town of Pelham, the Comfort Maple was accepted for preservation on April 30, 1961, by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. The land was donated to the NPCA by Edna Eleanor Comfort, in memory of her late brother, Earl.

### Appearance

The Comfort Maple may not be the most beautifully shaped tree, but there is something about it that captures your heart. Its thick, wonderfully textured branches extend from the main trunk at odd angles, and the right side of the crown looks a little flat, but that only adds to its mystique.

Its branches are particularly interesting. Apparently, at one time bricks were commonly used to seal old wounds to minimize injury. You will find examples of this type of repair on many of the lower, older branches. Though odd, the result is some fantastic textural variety.

During the spring, summer and fall, the tree is at its best though the winter habit is still awe-inspiring. In the spring, the Comfort Maple is a mass of green, turning to a spectacular red fireworks show in the fall. The strength and beauty of the maple's colour and size can be viewed as an inspiration for any Canadian or admirer alike.

No matter what time of year, the Comfort Maple is an awesome sight. Towering over neighbouring orchards, with its upper branches being supported by guy wires, the Comfort Maple, or "Old Glory," has stood proud and tall for hundreds of years. With the help and support of the NPCA and a lot of love from the community, hopefully it will remain for another 500 so that it can be enjoyed by generations to come.

### Directions

On the QEW, take exit 57, or Victoria Avenue. Travel south and turn left onto Metler Road. You will find the entrance to the conservation area on the right. This 0.2-hectare park is protected by the NPCA for its historical and biological significance.

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