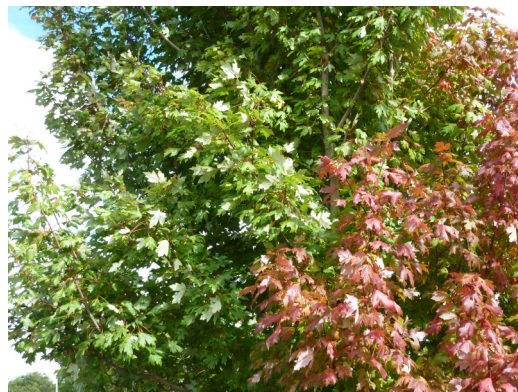




Bacterial Canker of Red Maple including Acer 'Autumn Blaze and Acer 'October Glory'

Why is my maple turning to autumn colour in summer?

The emergence of a disease that is new to Australia seems most likely to be the problem—a bacterial disease that infects the tree by entering wounded trunks and stems. In America the disease has caused some severe damage to plantations and to nurseries growing Acer 'October Glory and Acer 'Autumn Flame.



These images were taken in early March—far too early to be autumn colour. If you look closely you can see that the damage is only in some sections of the canopy. The reason for this is that the bacterial disease infects the stem and attacks the vascular system of the tree. The vascular system is the system of veins that carries water and nutrients up the tree and a separate system that carries sugars down to the roots. Damaged vascular tissue on one part of the stem affects only some parts of the canopy so this differential damage is caused. In America the wounds that are mostly found on these maples are caused by narrow winged crickets but here it is more likely that wound may be caused by water stress (too much or too little can cause cracks in the stem). Close examination of the tree will reveal weeping longitudinal wounds in the stem (see images below).

Can it be cured?

Being a bacterial disease there is no chemical treatment. The best cure is prevention so make sure trees are kept in good health so the trees can fight back. We are hopeful that the trees pictured above will recover if we get a few good growing seasons in a row.

