

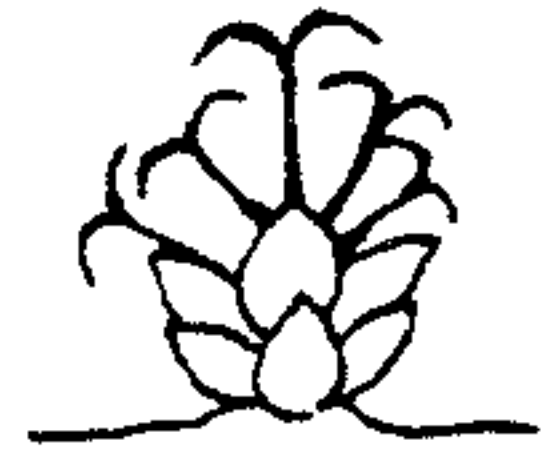
LOOK AGAIN !

The flowers of our native Maples provide us with an interesting subject for study in the spring.

Later in the season we will have no difficulty distinguishing between Red Maple (Acer rubrum) and Silver Maple (A. saccharinum) on the basis of their foliage, but the blossoms emerge very early so this is of no help. They grow in small clusters, each made up of either staminate or pistillate flowers. The two species are superficially similar but have one difference which is diagnostic: Each individual flower of Red Maple has five petals, while those of Silver Maple have none.



ACER RUBRUM



A. SACCHARINUM

In two others--Striped Maple (A. pennsylvanicum) and Mountain Maple (A. spicatum)--the situation is reversed. The flowers open later, but although the leaves are then in evidence they are confusingly similar, differing mainly in that the margins are finely toothed in the first species and coarsely serrate in the second. The flowers, however, present no problem. Both are greenish yellow, but those of Striped Maple are $\frac{1}{4}$ " long, bell-like, in pendulous racemes, while those of Mountain Maple are half as long with very narrow petals, and are much more numerous, in slender erect panicles.

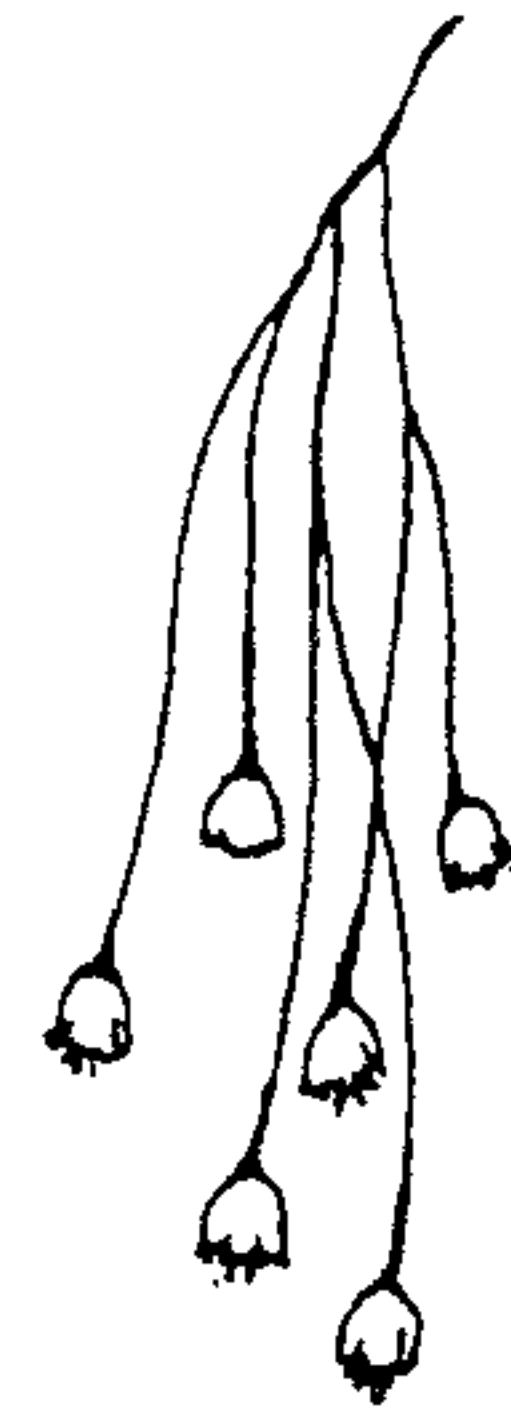


A. PENNSYLVANICUM



A. SPICATUM

Sugar Maple (A. saccharum) has leaves that resemble Red and Silver Maple but have only a few large teeth. Its flowers have pale yellow sepals but no petals, and hang from long, threadlike petioles.



A. SACCHARUM

Dick Smith