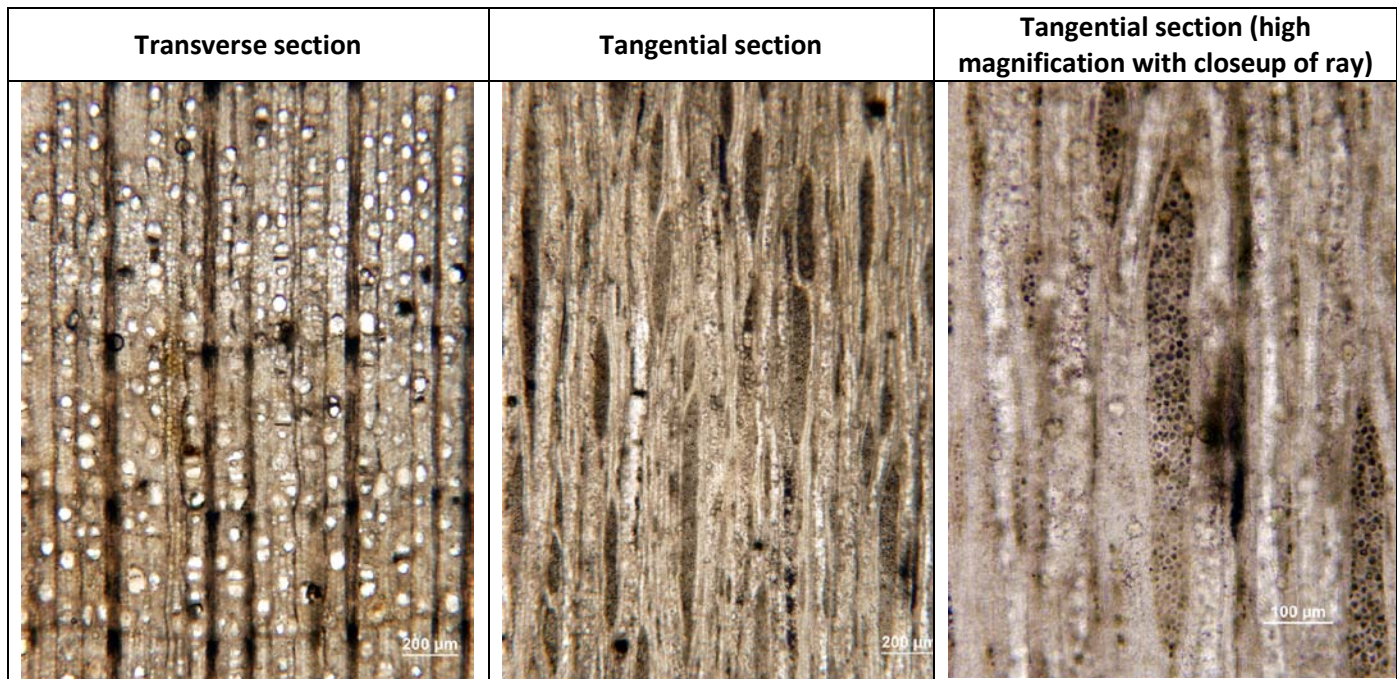


Acer olearyi (maple)

Family: Sapindaceae

Naming reference: Prakash, U. & E.S. Barghoorn. 1961. Miocene fossil woods from the Columbia basalts of central Washington, I. Journal of the Arnold Arboretum XLII, 165-199

Other reference: Wheeler, E.A. & T.A. Dillhoff. 2009. The Middle Miocene wood flora of Vantage, Washington, USA. IAWA Journal, Supplement 7. 101p.



Photos courtesy Dr. E.A. Wheeler

Diagnostic features: Distinct growth rings and diffuse porous vessel arrangement. Vessels solitary (~25%) and in radial multiples. Wide rays as wide or wider than largest vessels. Perforation plates simple with helical thickenings along the length of vessel elements. Rays 1-7 (can be >8) seriate, mostly 5-6, tending to two size classes. Axial parenchyma are rare. Crystals are absent from axial parenchyma strands.

Discussion: Four different species of fossil maple have been described from wood deposits of the Columbia River Basalts. This particular species is the only one that falls into the 'hard maple' group with wider rays. This species is separated from the other maples by its wide rays; the widest are typically wider than the largest vessels.

Beck (1945) listed maple as a common element of the Umtanum, Yakima Canyon, and Vantage wood assemblages. It has also been reported from Yakima Ridge and Squaw Creek/Badger Pocket. Fossilized maple leaves and seeds are commonly found in Cenozoic floras throughout the Pacific Northwest, and there are still several maple species native to the area today.



Fossil maple leaf from the Eocene McAbee flora of British Columbia