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Acer platanoides L. ‘Beskid’ – a new Norway Maple cultivar

Acer platanoides L. ‘Beskid’ – nowa odmiana klonu pospolitego

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ABSTRACT: A new cultivar of maple with very peculiar leaves is described and illustrated. A plant originated spontaneously among the seedlings of *Acer platanoides* used as rootstocks in an ornamental nursery, Krzywaczka. Probably this type of growth and shape of leaves resulted from gene mutation.

Key words: ornamental trees, breeding of new forms, dendrology

Growth habit. A tree, with slender, pyramidal crown and well-developed leader, side branches upright, not numerous at young stage. Relatively fast growth (Fig. 1).

Shoots and buds. Main shoots grow about 20-25 cm per year. Side shoots are short, up to 5 cm. Internodes are very short, 1-3 cm. Buds are small, typical for the species, densely arranged on the shoots.

Leaves. Leaves are variable in size. Drawings made from squashed and pressed leaves show that they are five-lobed and very similar in size and shape to those of the species, with lobulate lobes as well (Fig. 2, 3). However, drawings made from fresh leaves taken from the tree in early September show all the distinctiveness of this cultivar, both from the species and the other known cultivars. Leaves are strongly undulating on the topside and the lobes are strongly curling underside (circinate) (Fig. 4a). Leaf-blade is somewhat crimped and looks like a “blown sail” (Fig. 4b). Leafstalks are 4 to 10 cm long and as thick as those of the species. Leaf color is fresh green in the spring, but soon becomes dull



Fig. 1. *Acer platanoides* ‘Beskid’ from J. B. Szmit collection
(phot. by A. Marosz, 2008)

green and matt. Autumn color of the leaves is not always interesting, leaves are mostly brown, but sometimes they are golden yellow, especially when autumn is sunny and warm enough.

Flowers and fruit. Original plant has not flowered yet, so information about flower abundance and fruit setting will be completed in the future.



Fig. 2. *Acer platanoides* 'Beskid' from author's own collection (phot. by A. Marosz, 2008)

Origin. Plant originated spontaneously among the seedlings of *Acer platanoides* used as rootstocks about 1998. As a new Polish cultivar it was brought to cultivation in 2005 at Maria and Janusz Szewczyk Ornamental Nursery, Krzywaczka near Kraków. However, new plants obtained by grafting have not been sold yet. They may only be seen in a few private collections in Poland and abroad. In February 2006 this cultivar was submitted to breeder's right protection and two years later it was registered by COBORU in Book of Plants Breeder's Right in Poland as a distinct, uniform and stable cultivar of maple.

Propagation. Plants are propagated by early spring grafting on *Acer platanoides* as a rootstock. Graft-takes are satisfactory on a level of ca. 80-90 %.

Notes. It is very difficult to make comparisons to other cultivars of Norway maple. Mainly because of lack or shortage of information on numerous cultivars of Norway maple grown throughout the world. Between many

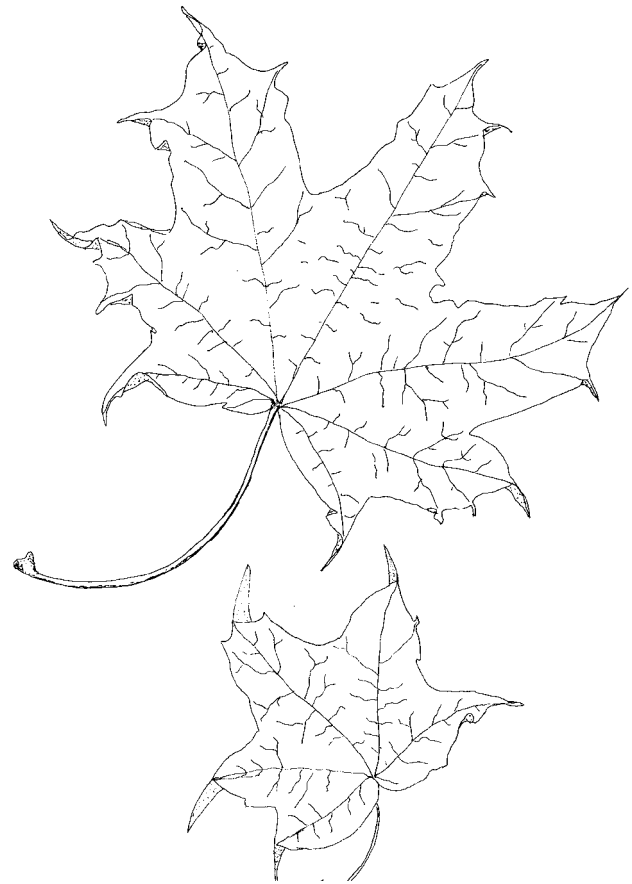


Fig. 3. Leaves of *Acer platanoides* 'Beskid', squashed and pressed, look like the leaves of the species (drawn by A. Marosz)

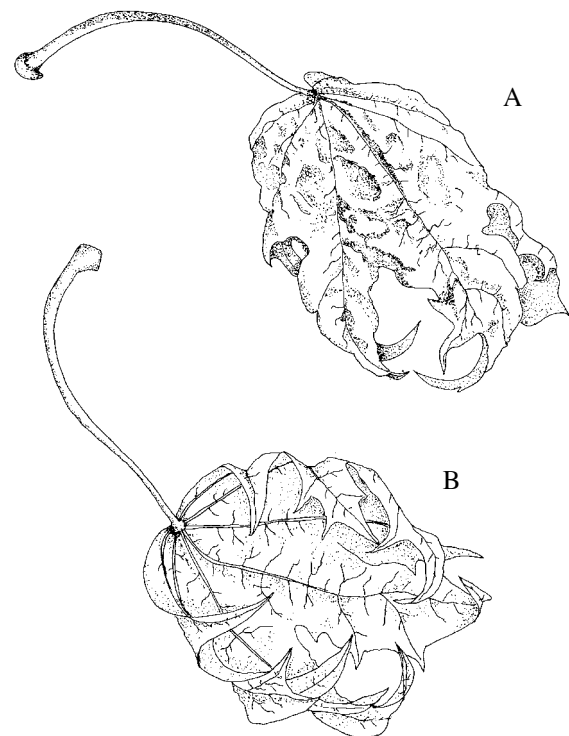


Fig. 4. Leaves of *Acer platanoides* 'Beskid' taken from tree in early September. A – underside of the leaf-blade. B – topside of the leaf-blade (drawn by A. Marosz)

cultivars described by Gelderen et al. (1994) only one have some features similar to 'Beskid' described here. That is 'Cucullatum' with crimped leaves, first described by Carrière (1866), but 'Cucullatum' is only occasionally seen in collections and is very rarely available (Gelderen et al. 1994). Probably there is no such plant in any collection in Poland but it can be found in Fa. C. Esveld collection in Holland. Picture of the leaves can be seen also online (Esveld 2009). Details of the leaves of this old cultivar are clearly shown also by Hardý de Beaulieu (2003), so it is very easy to make the comparison between 'Cucullatum' and described here 'Beskid', and draw own conclusions. Among new cultivars of *Acer platanoides* only 'Rezek' and 'Marit' could also be compared with our new Polish select, but plants differ mainly in the length of leafstalk which in 'Marit' are very short (2-3cm) and thick (0.5cm) – this is an unusual feature within the species. Leafstalk of 'Rezek' (rarely seen in collections and on the market) is longer (4-6 cm) and thinner than 'Marit'. Differences between all mentioned forms are also in leaves shape and size, as well as growth of plants. *Acer platanoides* 'Beskid' grows much faster than both cited here 'Rezek' and 'Marit'. Additionally 'Rezek' cannot be mislead with any other cultivar of Norway Maple as its very narrow columnar

crown is unique within the species. It is worth to mention that described 'Beskid' have also some intermediate features between typical species and one of the oldest (1683!) named cultivars – 'Laciniatum' (1683) (Gelderen et al. 1994). Trees of 'Laciniatum' are smaller, more twiggy and of more erect habit than those of species. Only leaves of 'Laciniatum' are quite similar to the 'Beskid', these are wedge-shaped at the base, lobes often curved, claw-like, but long ending. In comparison leaf-lobes of cultivar 'Laciniatum' are much more deeply incised than those of 'Beskid'. Moreover, Gelderen et al. (1994) underlines that although this cultivar is long in cultivation it is only occasionally available. Picture and detail of the leaves of this old cultivar are also presented online (Esveld 2009).

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