

# The Colonial Woodsmyth

**Common Name:** Birdseye Maple

**Bird's eye** is a type of figure that occurs within several kinds of wood, most notably in hard maple.

It has a distinctive pattern that resembles tiny, swirling eyes disrupting the smooth lines of grain. It is somewhat reminiscent of a burl, but it is quite different: the small knots that make the burl are missing.

It is not known what causes the phenomenon. Research into the cultivation of bird's eye maple has so far discounted the theories that it is caused by pecking birds deforming the wood grain or that an infecting fungus makes it twist. However, no one has demonstrated a complete understanding of any combination of climate, soil, tree variety, insects, viruses or genetic mutation that may produce the effect.

**Common Uses:** Bowling Pins, Boxes and crates, Charcoal, Decorative veneer, Domestic flooring, Food containers, Furniture , Lumber, Musical instruments , Paneling , Railroad ties, Tool handles, Windows, Baskets, Boards, Building materials, Casks, Chairs, Chests, Clogs, Concealed parts (Furniture), Crossties, Desks, Dining-room furniture, Dowell pins, Dowells, Drawer sides, Dressed boards, Drum sticks, Figured veneer, Fine furniture, Floor lamps, Flooring,

Furniture components, Furniture squares or stock, Handles, Hatracks, Interior construction, Kitchen cabinets, Living-room suites, Office furniture, Organ pipes, Packing cases, Parquet flooring, Piano keys, Pianos , Radio, stereo, TV cabinets, Rough boards/dimension stock, Rustic furniture, Shafts/Handles, Sounding boards, Sporting Goods, Stools, Sub-flooring, Tables , Utility furniture, Veneer, Violin, Violin bows, Wainscotting, Wardrobes, Xylophones

**Region:** North America

**Country:** Canada, United States

**Distribution:** The geographical range of Black maple in N. America includes Ontario, Quebec, Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont, Wisconsin, and West Virginia. The tree prefers moist soils of valleys and uplands, and is usually found growing in mixed hardwood forests. It may be found at elevations of up to 2500 feet (762 m) in the northern parts of its range, and at slightly higher elevations in the south. The ranges of Black maple and its close relative, Sugar maple are reported to be similar, although Black maple is reported to be more common in Iowa, while Sugar maple extends farther into Canada in the Northeast.

**Figure:**Curly figure is usually found in the Soft Maple varieties *Acer rubrum* and *Acer nigrum*. However, curly figure may be found in *Acer saccharum* as well. Curly figure occurs when the grain is distorted into a wavy pattern termed tiger maple or fiddleback.



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**Tree Data:** The tree is rather large, and is reported to attain a height of about 80 feet (24 m), with a trunk diameter of 24 to 36 inches (60 to 90 cm).

**Sapwood Color:** The sapwood is white with a reddish tinge.

**Heartwood Color:** Heartwood is uniformly light reddish brown.

**Grain:** Straight but occasionally curly or wavy. Bird's-eye figure is occasionally present. Flecks caused by insects may also be present in the wood.

**Texture:** The wood is very fine and even textured.

