

Acer palmatum - Japanese Maple

Common name: Japanese maple

Family: Aceraceae

USDA hardiness zone: 5B through 8B

Origin: Japan; not native to North America

Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf tree. Foliage color, depending on cultivar, varies from green to red to purple to a marbled pattern composed of varying combinations of white, pink and shades of green. Foliage shape can vary from the “normal” looking leaf to dissected (leaves with very thin lobes often referred to a “cut leaf” form). Dissected leaves impart a very lacy look and fine texture to plants. Spring and fall foliage colors are quite vibrant and can be bright red, yellow, chartreuse, or maroon. Red-leaved cultivars will have green leaves if grown in the shade.

Height: 12-25 feet (depending on cultivar)

Spread: 10-25 feet (depending on cultivar)

Light requirement: Full sun to full shade, but usually best in partial sun to partial shade

Soil tolerance: Clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained;

pH: 3.7-6.8

Drought tolerance: Moderate



Acer palmatum 'Bloodgood'



Acer palmatum 'Sangu Kaku'



Acer palmatum 'Viridis'

Currituck Master Gardeners Plant of the Month – August 2017

Japanese maple trees are prized for their delicate foliage throughout the growing season, and especially their fall foliage. It is one of the finest, most exquisite small trees for texture, form, foliage, and autumn color.

This large shrub or small tree tends to leaf out early, so it may be injured by spring frosts. Protect them from drying winds and direct sun by providing exposure to partial or filtered shade and well-drained, acid soil with plenty of organic matter, particularly in the southern part of its range. Can be used as a focal point, specimen, foundation, entranceway, or raised planter small tree in the landscape.

There are many cultivars of Japanese maple with a wide variety of leaf shapes, color, growth habits, and sizes. Some include: 'Atropurpureum' – reddish leaves with five lobes; 'Burgandy Lace' – reddish foliage and cut leaves; 'Bloodgood' – best for holding its red-purple foliage color all spring and summer when placed in full sun then to a vibrant red-orange in autumn; 'Viridis' of the dissectum group – bright green, lacey foliage and strongly cascading branches forming an elegant dome-shaped specimen; 'Elegans' – leaves with rose-colored margins when they first unfold; 'Ornatum' – foliage is reddish; 'Sango Kaku' – young stems that turn bright red in the winter and fall foliage of a very bright orange-yellow.

Pests and Diseases

Aphids infest maples and may be numerous at times. Chewing insects create occasional problems with foliage. Scales can occur on maples, with the most common being cottony maple scale which forms a cottony mass on the lower side of branches. Scales are usually controlled with horticultural oil sprays, however, several applications may be needed depending on the severity of the infestation. If borers become a problem, it is an indication the tree is not growing well. Proper control involves identification of the borer infesting the tree, and then applying insecticides at the proper time. Japanese Maples are prone to several diseases, including Verticillium wilt, stem cankers, and to seasonal leaf scorch that occurs with drought.

Sources:

Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication 2901-1049

IFAS Extension, University of Florida ENH-182

<http://plantfacts.osu.edu/pdf/0246-16.pdf>

TheSpruce.com