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Japanese Maples

Selection, Planting and Maintenance in North Texas

Japanese maples are one of the most unique plants in North Texas! With a wide range of leaf colors, textures, sizes, and fall colors, there's a Japanese maple well suited to almost any shady landscape in our area. Success with these beautiful plants starts at the nursery when you select the maple that best fits your own needs.

Selecting a Japanese Maple

Before selecting a Japanese maple, you'll want to determine the best location for it. Japanese maples need to be planted in no more than morning sun (stopping around noon or so), or in dappled sun all day. Deeper shade is fine, but too much sun will scorch the leaves every summer.

Once you've found an appropriate site to plant a tree, then you should determine how large a maple you wish to fit into your space, and whether you're looking for a weeping type or upright grower.

Knowing these pieces of information will narrow your choices considerably, making it easier to choose the right maple for your needs. Use the information on the back page of this handout to choose the maple that works best for you.

Planting a Japanese Maple

Once you've selected your maple and chosen your planting site, planting a Japanese maple is much like planting any other tree in our area, with just a bit of extra love thrown in. Japanese maples must have good drainage. Add extra expanded shale and compost in and around your planting site (beyond the normal amount you'd use to plant any tree), and plant your tree on a small mound of soil to ensure good drainage. Make sure you plant the tree's root ball well above grade. Take your time, and use more materials on doing this properly - a Japanese maple is a more expensive plant by the size than just about any other common tree or shrub you're likely to plant, so really spend the time to do it up right. It'll be a good investment.

When you're done planting your new maple, apply a thick layer of your favorite mulch.

Maintaining your Japanese Maple

Japanese maples require careful watering the first two summers to keep them looking their best. The leaves of these maples are thin and easily burned by blazing sun and hot winds. To prevent this, keep the plant well watered and mulched. Older trees will be tougher and less prone to this damage.

Feed your maple with a good acid-forming fertilizer, such as our ferti-lome Azalea Food or Happy Frog Japanese Maple fertilizers, every two months during the growing season. Top dress over the root zone with compost every few months, and add more mulch before the summer's heat kicks up each year. Keep in mind that the fastest growing Japanese maple is still a slow-growing plant compared to almost anything else! Be patient, they're worth it.

List of Japanese Maples

The Japanese maples on this list are separated by their two major types - "palmatum" maples have the more traditional pointed maple leaf, and the "dissectum" maples (sometimes called lace leaf maples) show deeply-divided leaves, divided down to the center of the leaf instead of further outward like a palmatum maple. Average mature heights and sizes for our area are listed below. Japanese maple grown in cooler climates may be larger. Most red Japanese maples will have their color lighten in the summer's heat (leaves will come closer to green, still hold red color but not as intense).

Black (palmatum) - 10-15' tall, dark red, almost blackened leaves when leaves are new, maturing to purple-red.

Bloodgood (palmatum) - 15'+ tall, burgundy-red leaves, scarlet fall color.

Burgundy Lace (palmatum) - 8-10' tall, leaves are more finely serrated, with deeper lobes. A lacy look compared to most palmatum maples. Solid red color.

Coral Bark or Sango kaku (palmatum) - to 15' tall, bright green leaves, coral-colored young twigs and branches turning brilliantly coral-orange during the winter.

Crimson Queen (dissectum) - 8-10' tall and wide, crimson leaves, weeping habit on a dwarf tree.

Emperor (palmatum) - 15'+ tall, dark red leaves, blackened-red bark. Vigorous grower for a Japanese maple.

Fireglow (palmatum) - 15'+ tall, wine-red leaves, denser grower than most Japanese maples.

Garnet (dissectum) - 8-10' tall, orange-red leaves, weeping habit.

Green (palmatum) - 20'+ tall, light green leaves, yellow fall color.

Green Laceleaf (palmatum) - 8-10' tall, light green leaves, yellow fall color, deeply cut palmatum leaves.

Inaba Shidare (dissectum) - 8-10' tall weeping habit, can be staked to 5' tall, purple-red leaves.

Kamagata (palmatum) - 3-4' tall, dwarf green plant, with yellow, orange, and some red fall colors.

Lion's Mane (palmatum) - 6-8' tall, tightly curled green leaves, crimson and gold fall color.

Moon Fire (palmatum) - to 15' tall, purple-red to blackened red leaves, holds color well in summer months.

Orangeola (dissectum) - to 6-8' tall, weeping, orange-red coloration spring and fall.

Oshio Beni (palmatum) - 10-15' tall, large, brightly colored red leaves in the spring, spreading canopy.

Red Dragon (dissectum) - 6-8' tall, darker purplish red than Crimson Queen, weeping, leaves have a unique look for a dissectum.

Ribbonleaf (dissectum) - 8-10' tall, darkened red leaves, deeply cut leaves have especially long lobes.

Ryusen (palmatum) - 8-10' tall, green leaves, orange-red fall color, upright and strongly weeping over.

Seiryu (dissectum) - 10+' tall, bright green weeping type.

Select Red - *see Inaba Shidare*, another name for this plant.

Shaina (palmatum) - 5' tall, upright dwarf plant, two-toned red leaves (both bright and dark reds).

Shirazz (palmatum) - 8-10' tall, unique pink, green, and cream variegated foliage.

Shojo Namura (palmatum) - 8-10' tall, purplish red leaves, cascading habit, crimson red fall color.

Suminagashi (palmatum) - 10-15' tall, open, upright, red stays well through summer, crimson red fall color.

Tamukeyama (dissectum) - to 6' tall, weeping, wide bodied plant.

Trompenburg (palmatum) - 10-15' tall, dark red leaves, leaves on older trees will curl in on themselves in an unusual fashion.

Waterfall (dissectum) - to 6-8' tall, laceleaf type, upright with weeping branches.