

Japanese Maples

Gray Barn Green Thumb Guide



For true year-round interest, Japanese Maples have it all. Spring color rivals flowering shrubs with vibrant leaf shades and Fall brings a spectacular fiery show.

Even in Winter Japanese Maples reveal an artistic and beautiful structure. Japanese Maples are hardy and adaptable to different soils and they thrive in our Northwest conditions. Used as a specimen plant, in a container or grouped with other plants, there is a size and shape for any garden.

Planting

Dig a hole slightly larger than the root ball and mix compost with the soil. This will help the roots to develop quickly. Keep the root collar level with the surface and fill in the hole with soil. Gently press down with foot to remove air pockets. Prepare planting hole in advance so roots don't dry out while you work. In heavy clay soils, maples can be planted slightly above ground level and dirt mounded up to root collar to improve drainage.

Mulching

Mulching will help keep the area weed free. This prevents competition of valuable resources until the plant has successfully established its root system. Mulch also protects the roots of newly planted trees from extreme cold. Ideal mulch depth is two inches.

Watering

Japanese maples have no special needs when it comes to watering, only a uniform supply to provide moisture to the shallow root system. Not too much, not too little, but rather consistency.

Fertilizing

Provide extra nutrients once year in early spring, before the leaves emerge. A balanced garden fertilizer applied lightly is all Japanese maples need. Some cultivars may lose their variegation if given excess fertilizer.

Pruning

Japanese Maples grow well with minimal pruning. Start by cutting out dead wood, crossing branches and twiggy growth. Shaping should be started early and considered each year. Reserve major pruning for the dormant season (late fall to mid winter) and when removing a large limb always cut just above the branch collar.

Insect Pests and Disease

Japanese Maples are usually not threatened from insects, but aphids, mites, scale and caterpillars can be a problem. An organic control, such as Neem oil, will help in these cases. A few commonly occurring diseases that can cause twig die-back and leaf blight are verticillium wilt, botrytis, and anthracnose. For further information see <http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/>

Maples in Sun and Shade

In full sun the green varieties perform the best. Variegated maples need partial shade and protection from hot afternoon sun.

The red cultivars will grow in partial shade, but will not develop their typical deep red colors without strong sunlight for part of the day.

Maples for Spring Color

- 'Akane' (yellow-orange)
- 'Benimaiko' (red-pink)
- 'Beniotaki' (red)
- 'Higasayama' (pink-red variegation)
- 'Shindeshojo' (red)
- 'Ukigumo' (white-pink)
- 'Wilson's Pink Dwarf' (red-pink)

Maples for Fall Color

- 'Coonara pygmy'
- 'Green Cascade'
- 'Ichigyoji'
- 'Omurayama'
- 'Sango kaku'
- 'Shirasuwanum'
- 'Waterfall'

Weeping

- 'Filigree'
- 'Red dragon'
- 'Orangeola'
- 'Green cascade'
- 'Viridis'
- 'Waterfall'

Variegated Maples

- 'Butterfly'
- 'Higasayama'
- 'Ukigumo'

Small Maples (6-13 ft.)

- 'Coonara pygmy'
- 'Filigree'
- 'Kinran' (red)
- 'Orangeola'
- 'Red Dragon'
- 'Shaina'
- 'Ukigumo'
- 'Waterfall'

Medium Maples (10-16 ft.)

- 'Benikawa'
- 'Butterfly'
- 'Kinran'
- 'Omureyama'
- 'Shindeshojo'

Large Maples (13-26 ft.)

- 'Beniotaki'
- 'Bloodgood' (red)
- 'Higasayama'
- 'Sango kaku'
- 'Seiryu'
- 'Shishigashira'
- 'Trompenburg'

Maples for Containers

- 'Benihime' (red)
- 'Benimaiko' (red)
- 'Butterfly' (variegated)
- Coonara pygmy
- 'Kinran' (red)
- 'Red Dragon' (red)
- 'Shaina' (red)
- 'Shindeshojo' (green)
- 'Shishigashira' (green)

Resources: [Japanese Maples](#) by J.D. Vertrees, 2007