



## PLANT CARE SERIES

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# Japanese Maples

Japanese maples are a group of plants that have one of the greatest ranges of use and beauty of any plant in use today. The diversity of size, color, form, shape and utility is so great that a Japanese maple can fit almost any need. Their foliage color ranges from the bold greens, to orange, orange-red, maroon, shades of red and even purple. Japanese maples even come in variegated forms which can range from a simple margin around the outside of a leaf to blotches that are randomly placed on the leaf.

They can have big bold leaves or they can have fine, delicate foliage. Their fall foliage can be bold and bright and their twigs and branches can have color and texture to add to your winter interest.

Japanese maples fit the role in the landscape in many ways; accent plants, shade for smaller under story plants and specimen plants. Some grow tall, others are spreading and some cascade. They add so much to a landscape. They are a tree for all seasons. Most Japanese maples are hardy to -20°F.

## EXPOSURE

Green varieties can take full sun very nicely. Variegated forms prefer semi shade and need protection from the hot afternoon sun. Red varieties appreciate some shade, but will keep their color better with strong sun for part of the day. And varieties with golden foliage prefer protection from the hot afternoon sun.

Try to place your Japanese maples in a protected area away from exposed, windy sites. When planting near a wall, reflected sun may burn the foliage in the summer. Japanese maples must have well drained soil. If not, mound the planting area.

## PLANTING

We recommend **Gardner & Bloome Soil Building Compost** or **Acid Planting Mix**, **Peace of Mind Japanese Fertilizer** and **Bonide Root n Grow**. See our **Planting Guide** for more information.

## MULCHING

Apply 2 to 4 inches of **Soil Building Compost** in a 3-foot diameter around your tree in the spring and again in the fall. Be sure not to pile the mulch up around trunk. Mulching helps with weed control, moisture control and for winter protection.

## FERTILIZING

Apply **Peace of Mind Japanese Maple Fertilizer** in the early spring before the leaves emerge.

## PRUNING

Thoughtful pruning and shaping should be done each year. Major dormant pruning time is late November or December. Pruning past mid-winter will encounter rising sap, with potential for disease to enter.

Make major cuts against the outer edge of the branch collar (the bulge where trunk and branch meet), but try not to leave a stub. Observe the buds direction when making heading-back cut on smaller branches.

Be sure to sterilize tools between cuts to avoid spreading disease. Use 1 tablespoon of bleach in a one-quart sprayer, or a Lysol spray. Maples enter dormancy in July and August: pruning then will reduce size and correct spring growth abnormalities. Regular summer pruning can maintain a large variety much smaller size.

*Please turn the page for more information.* ➔

Most varieties produce a second flush of growth in the fall, pruning of smaller branches for shaping may be done the (or anytime) Throughout the growing season remove fine twiggy growth coming from the center of the plant to enhance overall natural form.

All forms of Japanese maples benefit from the removal of dead inner branches. Die-back of lower and inner branches is normal due to lack of light. You should also prune out crossing branches, duplicate branches or ones showing obvious signs of disease.

## WATERING

Japanese maples have a fibrous root system, and because of these delicate roots Japanese maples require even moisture with the root zone. Water early in the morning or in the early evening to prevent water on the foliage in full sun. Deep water 1 or 2 times a week depending on your soil texture.

## SPRAYING

Spray your Japanese maple in late fall (after leaf drop) and early spring (before leaf break) with **Bonide Copper Spray**.

Verticillium wilt is a serious soil born fungal disease causing die-back and ultimately death of the plant. (There is not cure for this disease, but keeping your tree healthy and using **Peace of Mind Japanese Maple Fertilizer** will help.)

After losing a plant to this disease do no attempt to plant another Japanese maple in the same location. Meticulous sanitation in pruning and clean-up will help control the spread of this disease. Do not compost diseased plant material.

In the Pacific Northwest, where late frosts are not uncommon, Japanese maples may experience branch die-back when buds have begun to break dormancy during a previous warm spell. A certain amount of die-back is normal and should be expected, so do not assume the worst. Verticillium wilt is NOT as common as our attention to it might indicate. Trim back dead branches after the plant has leafed out.

## CONTAINER GROWING

Japanese maples make great container plants. When planting Japanese maples in containers we recommend **Gardner & Bloome Potting Soil**, **Peace of Mind Japanese Fertilizer** and **Bonide Root n Grow**. During the hot summer months there maybe times you may need to water on a daily basis. Be sure to check drainage holes in pots 1 to 2 times a year to be sure they are not plugged.

### CHECK LIST

- Japanese Maple(s)
- Soil Building Compost
- Acid Planting Mix
- Peace of Mind Japanese Maple Fertilizer
- Bonide Copper Spray
- Bonide Root n Grow