



Japanese Maples

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Japanese Maples Vary in Hardiness

Japanese maples originated from China, Japan, and Korea. There are over 1000 cultivars today. Most Japanese maples found in nurseries come from *Acer palmatum* (most common) or *Acer japonicum*. They include many different sizes, shapes, and hardiness levels.

Varieties to Plant

Japanese maples are prized for their compact size (shrub to small tree), shape, and colour of foliage. They are usually categorized by leaf shape including palmate, deeply divided types, dissected (fine and deeply) types, and serrated.

Some excellent zone 5 cultivars of Japanese maples include:

- 'Bloodgood' – 6 m tall, one of the most popular and hardy, deep purple/red leaves which hold colour well
- 'Emperor 1' – 6 m tall, dark purple foliage, fades little in summer heat, hardy, and vigorous
- 'Sumigashii' – 4 m tall, serrated and deeply divided wine and red leaves, hardy, and very attractive

Preferred Conditions

Japanese maples need a sheltered site which is protected from severe NW winds. This plant requires winter wrapping if planted in an exposed site. Depending on the cultivar, they will grow from full sun to almost full shade. However, it prefers protection from the mid-day sun. Note that the leaves are more colourful in higher light conditions. Japanese maples like well-drained soil but are not drought hardy. They prefer consistent moisture. Be sure to mulch your Japanese maple well (minimum 5 cm), especially after planting. They do not like to be heavily fertilized because excessive growth can occur which is weak and prone to disease.

Care and Pruning

Prune Japanese maples for major structural revisions before leaves unfurl in spring. However, the weeping forms seldom need pruning.

The trees are particularly suitable for borders and ornamental paths because the root systems are compact and not invasive.

The purple/red leaves of some varieties look especially lovely when under-planted with a low, deep green ground cover. Many cultivars are successfully grown in containers.

Problems you Might Encounter

Japanese maples are susceptible to very few pests. Aphids or leaf cutters may appear in spring and mildew may appear in humid conditions.

Learn more about Japanese Maples [here](#)