



NEW GARDEN
LANDSCAPING & NURSERY

newgarden.com
email:info@newgarden.com

New Garden Village
5572 Garden Village Way
Greensboro, NC 27410
phone: 336-665-0291

New Garden Gazebo
3811 Lawndale Dr.
Greensboro, NC 27455
phone: 336-288-8893

Japanese Maples

Japanese Maples, *Acer palmatum* varieties, make magnificent specimens in the landscape but are also effective as groupings, accents, borders, or even as bonsai. Slow-growing (sometimes moderate in youth) and therefore somewhat expensive, these trees definitely add an artistic touch.

After considering eventual size and relation to other landscape elements, there are three keys to siting a Japanese Maple: sun exposure, drought protection, and late winter protection.

Ideally, Japanese Maples should be planted in dappled shade. With too little sun the plants grow more slowly and fail to keep a good red color. Too much sun can literally cook them in summer. Full morning sun with afternoon shade creates a desirable location, as well.

Second, drought protection should be considered. Always apply adequate mulch and provide supplemental water in our droughty periods.

Finally, protect from sweeping winds and late spring frosts, as new foliage is quite tender. A hard freeze in April 1997 robbed many trees in Greensboro of an entire year's growth.

Many varieties of Japanese Maples exist and can be divided into two groups—upright and weeping (also called dissectum for their finely dissected leaves). Listed below are a few varieties that we normally carry:

Upright Group

BLOODGOOD: Perhaps the most well-known and best for leaf-color retention, Bloodgoods are a slow-growing tree with a rounded crown. They reach 15-20 feet high and wide. Excellent red fall color.

BURGUNDY LACE: A smaller tree with a more dissected leaf, these trees reach about 10 to 12 feet high with similar spreads.

BUTTERFLY: A variegated form of Japanese Maple, vase-shaped and approximately 12-15 feet high and 6-10 feet wide. Nice red to reddish-purple fall color.

EMPEROR I: A great type of Japanese Maple. Dark purple pigment in the leaves holds its purple color in summer. Grows 15-20 feet tall and wide. Leafs out later to avoid frost!

FIREGLOW: A smaller tree that reaches the height of 10 to 15 feet and grows to about as wide. Excellent transcending red foliage which glows in the evening sun.

SANGU KAKU: Somewhat larger (exceeding 20 feet high with a slightly smaller spread), the coral-colored bark of these trees provides excellent fall and winter interest (a traffic-stopper after a new snow). New leaves are reddish, turn green in summer, and change to yellow-gold with red tones in fall.



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New Garden Landscaping & Nursery

"Where your imagination takes root"

Japanese Maples cont.

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SERIYU: A very unique, attractive green-leaf Japanese Maple. Leaves are of the lace-leaf type, and the tree has a beautiful layered canopy. 15-25' tall and wide.

SHAINA: A smaller Japanese maple, growing to about 6-8' tall and 8-10' wide, 'Shaina' is suitable for smaller gardens. Bright red new foliage matures to deep maroon-red. Freely branching growth becomes dense with maturity.

Dissectum Group

CRIMSON QUEEN: Brilliant red new growth in spring and scarlet fall color characterize this weeping variety, which also seems to maintain its red color through summer better than most varieties. Eventually reaching about ten feet high and slightly wider, Crimson Queen develops handsome branches cascading to the ground.

EVER RED: A vigorous form with cascading, pendulous growth habit that may not hold its summer color as well as 'Crimson Queen'. 'Ever Red' can reach fifteen feet and possesses a fiery red fall color.

GARNET: Eight to ten feet tall and wide, a nice weeping form, coarse reddish leaves, and good red fall color, too.

INABA SHIDARE: A more sturdy and faster-growing variety in the dissectum family! Purple-red in the spring and it holds its color well in the summer. Fall color is red to crimson.

TAMUKEYAMA: Young foliage is crimson red, turning to a purple-red that holds quite well.

Interestingly, this variety may have been around since 1710. Fifty to one hundred year old plants are thirteen feet high. Leaves are not quite as dissected as others.

VIRIDIS: A green-leaved variety with yellow-gold to red fall color. Leaves are finely dissected on this specimen which usually reaches ten feet tall and wide.

WATERFALL: Another green-leaved form sometimes available to us. Reaches ten feet high and wider with golden-red fall color.

Closely related to *Acer Palmatum* are the Fullmoon Maples, *Acer japonicum*. Larger growing (to thirty feet), Fullmoon Maples have a leaf that is similar to, but broader than, most Japanese Maples. These are green-leaved trees with rich yellow and crimson fall color.

