

Japanese Maple Planting and Care Guide

Maples in the Landscape

- ♦ Choose a location that is protected from drying wind and the hot sun. Maples prefer the full morning sun and appreciate afternoon shade. Either the North or East side of a house or fence is ideal. These locations will block the wind and protect from the afternoon heat. Placing maples under or near larger trees is also a good choice for our hot, inland area.
- ♦ Soil preparation is *the most important element* in the overall health of a Japanese maple. Our soil is mostly clay, has a high pH, and drains slowly. Japanese maples prefer an airy, fast draining soil with a lower pH. (Japan is basically an inactive volcano making its soil a lot like lava rock.) To achieve the correct balance of pH, drainage, and water retention a few amendments will be necessary.

1/3 Master Nursery Acid Planting Mix
1/3 Master Nursery Forest Bark, Bark – Small Size
1/3 Native soil

Mix all three items well, and use this to backfill the hole. Creating a mound to plant in is a great way to ensure good drainage for muddy areas.

- ♦ Japanese maples need a regular water supply (with good drainage). Allowing the soil to dry out completely will severely injure the roots. Be sure to provide for deep, regular watering (i.e. drip irrigation). See reverse side of this guide for tips on keeping your maple healthy in hard water areas.
- ♦ Be sure to keep an area of at least 3 feet around the maple clear of grass, groundcover, and weeds. Mulch to a depth of two inches to moderate soil temperatures and conserve moisture. Avoid fertilizing the area especially with high nitrogen lawn fertilizers, as this will cause leggy, ungainly growth. Japanese Maples grow slowly, so pruning should be kept to damaged or diseased wood only- for large specimen pruning call a professional.

Maples in Containers

- ♦ Many varieties of Japanese maple can be grown in containers successfully with little effort. This has become increasingly popular for today's smaller yards, patios, and even Bonsai.
- ♦ Select a pot for your tree that will allow ample room for root growth; this will be determined by the size of the root ball you start with. A wider shallow pot is ideal as Japanese maples have shallow roots systems. You can use plastic, ceramic, wood, or terra cotta – keep in mind wood and terra cotta pots dry out faster than others and will require more frequent watering. **Be sure the pot has plenty of drain holes.**
- ♦ Choose a site for your container that has good morning sun with afternoon shade, and is accessible for watering. Be sure the container can sit in a position that allows water to flow freely out of the drain holes. A container plant should never be allowed to sit in standing water, so use pot feet or bricks to be sure the pot is up off the ground slightly. Saucers are *not recommended* for container grown Japanese maples.
- ♦ It is important that your soil mix drains quickly.

50% - Micro Bark
50% - Master Nursery Acid Planting Mix
Perlite – 2 cups per 18 inch container

Mix the soil and bark together then add the extra perlite, and mix well before potting.

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