

Acer palmatum
Japanese maple



Acer palmatum (Japanese maple) would appear to be the most popular maple in cultivation. It is a highly variable plant and there are thousands of cultivars in existence. *Acer palmatum* displays a naturally multi-stem growth habit with a broad vase-shaped to irregularly rounded crown, ten metres tall and the same across. In Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Eastern China, it is found growing in the wild as undergrowth where it can achieve a height of fifteen metres. Swedish naturalist Carl Peter Thunberg was the first to describe it in 1784. For centuries, the Japanese maple has been used in Japanese, Chinese and Korean gardens.

The foliage of *Acer palmatum* is the principal reason for planting it: it is palmate and made up of five to seven, pointed-tip lobes. The foliage frequently changes colour: it emerges yellow-green with red tips to bronze-coloured in the spring, turns green in summer, and this is followed by a spectacular array of yellow-orange to red-orange autumn hues. The fine branching and attractive leaf shape filter the sun's rays to magnificent effect, and consequently it is easy to overlook the fact it also bears a striking flower. Corymbs of purple-red pendulous flowers form a really delightful contrast with the green foliage in April and May. Bees love them. Its green, winged seeds - known as samaras - are also decorative, and change colour to red in the late summer. The Japanese maple has a smooth, grey-brown bark and green shoots that can be rather prone to sunburn.

Acer palmatum is a true park and garden tree. This climax species prefers a woodland soil: well-drained but constantly damp and humus-rich sandy soils. Partial shade is best but it also tolerates a sunnier spot - if the soil is good and the base of the trunk is shaded. Even tolerant of full shade. However, *Acer palmatum* does not like heat, paving, wet and cold soils and is only moderately tolerant to wind. In garden-like surroundings, this magical species looks best as a multi-stem tree or whimsical standard - creating a real woodland garden or Oriental garden feel.

SEASONAL COLOURS

jan	feb	mar	apr	mei	jun	jul	aug	sep	okt	nov	dec

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

USE

Location: park, in containers, large garden, cemetery | **Pavement**: none

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: wide vase-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 7 - 10 m | **Width**: 7 - 10 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 5B - 9B

ASPECTS

Wind: slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, nectar value 1, pollen value 1

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: corymbose, striking, pendulous, small | **Flower colour**: red | **Flowering period**: April - May | **Leaf colour**: buds bronze, green | **Leaves**: deciduous, palmate, opposite, laciniate, lobate | **Autumn colour**: orange-red | **Fruits**: discrete, winged, small | **Fruit colour**: red-brown | **Bark colour**: grey-brown | **Bark**: smooth | **Twig colour**: green | **Twigs**: bare | **Root system**: shallow, compact, many hair roots, fine roots

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