



METRO MAPLES

April 2020 Newsletter



OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

What we're doing to keep our customers and our trees healthy.

'CRIMSON QUEEN'

Our featured variety this month is among our most popular and for good reason!

PEST & DISEASE CONTROL

Common issues and how to address them safely.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

This spring has brought with it some unprecedented challenges.

We are still doing what we can to run a small business and meet our customers' needs, while keeping those customers and ourselves safe and healthy. To that end, we are going to shift to a "By Appointment



Only" model -- where only one customer is at the farm at any one time. Or if you'd rather, you can call/email and share with us the types of tree you're interested in, and we can email you photos of specific trees based upon your requirements. Then, you could either have the trees delivered or loaded in your car/truck in a "curbside pickup."

The farm looks absolutely amazing right now, and we have literally tons of new inventory. We'd love to have you all come out -- just one at a time. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call at 817-797-3419.



The deep burgundy color on this 'Crimson Queen' will persist into summer if given a couple of hours of morning sun.

'CRIMSON QUEEN'

Acer palmatum 'Crimson Queen' is one of the most popular varieties of Japanese maple found in nurseries today.

'Crimson Queen' is a weeping red Japanese maple that grows slowly to never more than 6' tall but can get substantially wider than that after a decade or two. That being said, for practical purposes, planning on a tree that is 4' tall by 6' wide would be advisable.

Like other "red" Japanese maples, the brightest colors are to be expected in spring and fall. 'Crimson Queen' leafs out a bright red, which darkens to a maroon/green mixture through the summer, and then becomes an intense red (one might call it "crimson") in the fall.

We have many red-leafed weeping varieties in stock at Metro Maples, and the differences between the varieties are pretty subtle. 'Crimson Queen' tends to have a more finely dissected leaf than either 'Tamukeyama' or 'Inaba Shidare' as well as a slightly denser habit. The latter two varieties are more sun tolerant than 'Crimson Queen', so if your location will mean more than a couple of hours of morning sun, it might be best to consider those instead. But if your location is relatively shady all day, the 'Crimson Queen' will perform terrifically.



We currently have trees in a wide range of sizes available. Check the "Our Inventory" page of our website for more details!

PEST & DISEASE CONTROL

It's been an unusually wet spring so far, and with all of us spending much more time than normal at home, many of you have started noticing unwanted visitors in your landscapes.

And with disease prevention being top of mind in general, we thought we'd go over some common pests and diseases and give you some ideas on how to identify, treat, and prevent these issues.



These little guys love to eat aphids. And they're pretty adorable as far as cold-blooded killers go.

Aphids are not usually a big problem, but in wet springs like we've had this year, they can sometimes be found munching on the undersides of young tender leaves that have just opened up. These little green soft-bodied critters can often be controlled with a simple blast of water from the hose, or you can purchase ladybugs and place them in the vicinity. They love eating aphids as well as a number of other insects.

Powdery mildew is a fungus that grows on the surfaces of the leaves. It looks like a whitish film that grows and spreads like mold on bread. Small round spots will spread and eventually cover the entire surface of the leaf. This one is best controlled with a fungicide sprayed on the leaves. Any general fungicide you'd find at a garden center will indicate whether it controls Powdery Mildew. Most do. One word of caution: Neem Oil is frequently recommended as a fungicide, but we've seen Japanese maples in particular struggle after having Neem Oil applied, especially early in the growing season.



The telltale black bark of pseudomonas infection.
Photo credit: Michael Hagedorn, Crataegus.com

Pseudomonas is a bacteria that can cause dieback and loss of entire branches of trees. The best indicator of this pathogen is purplish-black areas on the bark. The tree can be treated with a systemic bactericide like Phyton 35, which can be applied as a drench around the base of the tree. (This is pretty intense stuff, so be sure to read the label and carefully follow the instructions.) This can stop the progression of the disease, but won't revive dead tissue. Once a branch has died back, it's best to prune it away, discard it, and immediately clean your pruners with a disinfectant.

Beetles, caterpillars, etc, are rarely an issue on Japanese maples but can be controlled with a systemic insecticide like Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control, which is applied as a drench around the root system of the tree.

Spider mites are probably the pest we deal with the most at the farm, especially in the hotter drier times of the year. The damage is rarely anything beyond cosmetic, but it does slow the growth of the tree. The damage presents as a stippled discoloration on the leaves that looks a bit like overspray from an air brush or spray paint. The leaves will be a lighter color than normal.



The stippled discoloration on the leaf is the best indication of spider mite infestation.
Photo credit: Adam Dale, NC State University

Spider mites themselves are quite tiny and are hard to see. The best way to spot them is to place a sheet of white paper beneath a branch and shake the branch vigorously. The spider mites will fall onto the paper, where you'll be able to spot their little red bodies.

Controlling spider mites can be done with a foliar spray of miticide. Multiple miticides, actually. The best practice is to use more than one type of miticide and use them in rotation. We have used Floramite and Avid with success. Again, follow the instructions on the package carefully, and be sure to wear protective clothing when indicated.

The best thing you can do to control all of these pests is to make sure your trees are planted correctly, have plenty of drainage, and good air circulation. It's also important to practice good hygiene when it comes to your pruners and saws. Fertilizing correctly (which is to say minimally - see last month's newsletter) can also be a big help. The healthier your tree is, the less appealing it is to predators and the less susceptible it is to disease.



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