



# METRO MAPLES

*February 2019 Newsletter*



## FEBRUARY CHECKLIST

Spring is just around the corner, and now is the time to prepare!



## 'VIRIDIS'

Our featured variety this month is one of our most popular dissectums.



## CONTAINERS

This month's Q&A:  
Can I grow Japanese maples in a pot?

## FEBRUARY CHECKLIST

It's still winter, but spring is just around the corner. And while landscapes aren't nearly as colorful and dynamic this time of year, there are a few things you can do now to set up your trees for a healthy and prosperous spring and summer.

1. Transplant -- If you have been considering moving a tree to a new location, now is the time to act. Transplanting a tree when it is dormant gives it a chance to recover and grow roots in its new location prior to the spring growing season and the heat of summer.

2. Prune - Winter gives you a chance to see your tree's structure and make any necessary cuts without any confusion.

3. Fertilize - Late February is an ideal time to apply a light dose of a balanced, slow-release fertilizer like Osmocote. We recommend applying at half the rate indicated on the package.





## 'VIRIDIS'

*Acer palmatum* 'Viridis' is one of our most popular weeping Japanese maples. It is also one of the few weeping cultivars we offer that consistently turns a bright yellow in the fall here in Texas.

Like the other weeping varieties, 'Viridis' forms a low, spreading shrub. It is usually less than 6' tall and quite wide -- sometimes as much as 8' wide but only if given a decade or more to grow.

The dissected (feather-like, finely cut) leaves emerge a bright green in spring and maintain a light green color through the summer, followed by yellow with some orange or red in the fall.

Perspective is everything. This tree is only about 5' tall, photographed from the ground beneath its canopy of contorted branches.

Like all weeping varieties, you can train the tree to increase its height more quickly by staking it for a season or two. If left to its own devices, the tree will grow in an interesting, sculptural, and contorted fashion, but will focus its efforts toward getting wider and denser rather than taller.



Fall color on 'Viridis'



Dense layers of finely dissected foliage make 'Viridis' distinctive.

'Viridis' makes an excellent small focal point, provides delicate texture, and adds an elegant grace to the garden.

Most of the specimens we have available today are less than 4' tall and wide at present. We currently have trees in 1, 2, 3, 7 and 10 gallon sizes available for purchase, and a few very large specimens set to arrive in March.

# CONTAINERS

One of the most common questions we're asked is, "Can I grow these in a pot?"

The short answer is, "Yes."

But who wants the short answer?

Japanese maples like excellent drainage, and do very well in containers, whether that's a bonsai pot, a terracotta flower pot, or a large planter or raised bed.

The biggest caveat being that you'll need to be extra attentive when it comes to watering, especially in the summer months.



A young upright Japanese maple in a container.

Trees in pots will need to be watered at least twice a week and possibly more in summer, depending on the size of the tree, the shape and type of container, and the amount of sun in the location.

A bigger pot is not necessarily better. A good analogy is to think about buying shoes for growing kids: you want to go up one size at a time -- maybe two sizes at most. If the pot is too large, the roots can't drink up the water quickly enough, and the soil can stay too wet. Soggy soil can lead to fungal disease and root rot.

A good plan would be to promote your tree to a larger pot every 2-3 years. You can pull the root system out of the pot and quickly determine if the roots have completely filled the container. If they have, its time to go up a size. If not, you can just slip the tree back in the container and make a note to check it again next spring.

Japanese maples work really well in containers, and the containers can provide great flexibility for growing trees on porches, patios, or in small gardens. We have a few thousand Japanese maples to choose from at Metro Maples, and we'll be happy to help you find the one that best meets your needs.



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