



# METRO MAPLES

June 2020 Newsletter



## SUMMER IS HERE!

Gearing up for the long hot Texas summer.



## 'BENI HAGOROMO'

A rare and unusual maple with some truly unique qualities.



## HOW TO WATER

Best practices for watering your Japanese maples.

## SUMMER IS HERE!

Summer is here, and the *optimal* time to plant large trees is now officially behind us. From now until the heat breaks in fall it is going to require a bit more effort on your part to make sure your new trees adjust to their new surroundings. It's hot outside, and change can be stressful.

Still, it never hurts to spend a little time at the nursery -- even if it's just to pick up a container-grown little one, or just to get ideas for what you want to add to your gardens this fall.



**We will be closed on Saturday the 4th of July**, but will be setting appointments Mondays through Saturdays throughout the summer just as we have done since April. We will be wearing our masks, and would encourage you to do the same.

If you'd like to make an appointment, please send us an email at [metromaples@yahoo.com](mailto:metromaples@yahoo.com). We'd love to see you!



Spring color is a vivid red, and the leaves are atypical to say the least.

## 'BENI HAGOROMO'

Most of our customers find Metro Maples while looking for upright red-leaved Japanese maples like 'Red Emperor' or 'Fireglow'.

But, it's not unusual for folks to look around a bit during their visit and most are surprised by just how many varieties there are. Often, they'll end up picking 1 or 2 more -- or they'll go home intent on finding a spot for another one.

Some don't stop there. They become collectors. They want one of each, and the more unique the tree the better. Upright, weeping, big leaves, little leaves, green, red, yellow, rough bark, smooth bark. They want them all, and the stranger the better.

This tree is for them.

'Beni hagoromo' is an upright Japanese maple that grows to about 10-12' tall and nearly as wide. That's not the unique part.

The leaves on this tree are unlike any other Japanese maple we carry. Instead of a "palmate" leaf (with 5-7 lobes that radiate like fingers from the palm of your hand), this palmatum has no palm to speak of.

It's all fingers. The serrated leaves look like clusters of feathers that radiate from a central point.

The foliage is also quite colorful, emerging a very bright pink-red, then transitioning to green with red or bronze highlights in summer before returning to a brilliant scarlet in fall. It's quite a stately looking small tree, and would make a great addition to the landscape -- and to your growing collection of Japanese maples in all their various forms and colors.

We have 'Beni hagoromo' in 1 gallons for \$25 and several larger specimens in 15-gallon containers that are 7-9' tall for \$275 available for purchase.



Summer color is mostly green with a little red here and there.

Photo credit: Nancy Doubrava, JC Raulston Arboretum

## HOW TO WATER

As the temperatures climb and rain becomes less frequent, the need to water your trees will increase. Water is essential to growing Japanese maples, and watering *correctly* might be the single best thing you can do for a tree in your landscape.

*Is this going to be complicated?*

Not really. What we're looking for is a consistently moist soil that is neither soggy nor completely dry.



Just for the record, this is waaay too much water. Also that leaf should ideally be on a tree somewhere.

An irrigation system (either sprinkler or drip) will do just fine. Water is water, and the tree won't care how the water gets there. That being said, it's always a good idea to check on your trees regularly to make sure they are healthy and aren't too wet or too dry.

*How will I know if the soil is too dry?*

The tree will let you know first by wilting. The leaves will droop and look sad and tired. Next, the tips of the leaves will begin to turn a dry, sandy brown color. If the drought continues, the dryness will work its way down the leaves until the entire leaf is dry and crispy.

*How will I know if the soil is too wet?*

This can be a bit trickier, as the tree will give you a similar look if the soil is too wet. The leaf tips will brown, but tend to be a darker brown color, and the tree can wilt. The best strategy is to simply check the soil with your finger. If the tree is stressed and the soil beneath it is muddy or soggy, it's definitely too wet.

*So there is such a thing as too much water?*  
Definitely.

*Why is that?*

Japanese maples want a balance of both water and air in their root systems. That's why we're always talking about good drainage. When the water drains away, air fills the little pockets in the soil where the water was and the roots use that air.



Healthy foliage and new growth.



This tree photographed in fall color got a little dry the previous summer. The dry tips of the leaves are the first sign that your tree is a little thirsty.

*Do they need more water when it's hot?*  
Yes. Water evaporates through their leaves, and the warmer and drier the air is, the faster that evaporation happens. So when we get those triple-digit temperatures later this summer, it's likely your trees will want some extra water just like we will.

*What about Shantungs?*

Shantung maples are far more drought-tolerant than Japanese maples, and grow better in adverse conditions. For the first year after you plant your Shantung (including 'Fire Dragon') it would be great to give the tree a drink every 10 days or so.

Once the tree becomes established, it can be quite drought tolerant. You'll get a denser crown and more vigorous growth with regular watering, but Shantungs are highly adaptable and will adjust their growth rate to their conditions.

One thing Shantungs really resent is flooded or water-logged soil. The best way to avoid this is obviously to plant the tree in a location that doesn't flood. The second best way is to make sure the root flare of the tree is elevated above the surrounding grade. Even a height of 3 or 4 inches can make a big difference in the health of the tree.



This picture has nothing to do with watering, but is lovely nonetheless.

We hope these few pointers will help you and your trees through the harsh Texas summer with a little less stress.



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