



METRO MAPLES

March 2019 Newsletter



NEW TREES ARE HERE!

20 tons (literally) of new trees have arrived and are ready to go home with you today!



'COONARA PYGMY'

Our featured variety this month is a terrific upright dwarf that puts on a great show in fall.



HOW TO FERTILIZE

When it comes to fertilizing, sometimes less is more.

NEW TREES ARE HERE!

Earlier this month, we received the first and largest shipment of the spring from our suppliers in Oregon.

Literally 20 tons of material was delivered, and it took our crew the better part of a week to unload, unwrap, sort, and arrange all those trees.

While we still pride ourselves on our selection of unusual varieties that are difficult to find, the 20 different cultivars that were included in this month's shipment could accurately be described as the "Greatest Hits" from our 25 year history.

We have new specimens of upright reds like 'Red Emperor,' 'Trompenburg,' and 'Bloodgood.' We have several sizes and price points of weeping varieties like 'Orangeola,' 'Tamukeyama,' and 'Viridis'. We have six absolutely massive, dense and amazing specimens of 'Twombly's Red Sentinel' that have to be seen to be believed. The colors on these trees in April will be stunning. It's been a busy time, but there's nothing more fun for us than sharing new trees with our customers. Come see us!





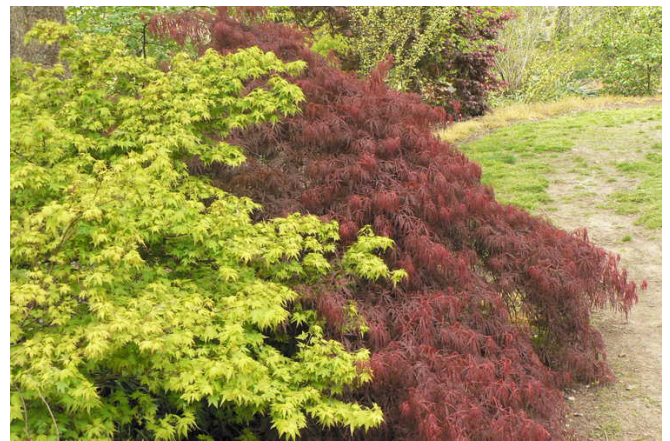
'COONARA PYGMY'

Acer palmatum 'Coonara Pygmy' is a terrific upright dwarf Japanese maple that grows to about 6' tall and wide and can really brighten a shady garden.

Discovered in 1965 by Arnold Teese of Yasmina Rare Plant Nursery in Victoria, Australia, on the grounds of a 100 year old botanic garden, this variety originated as a "witches' broom" on a large old *Acer Palmatum*. Mr. Teese recognized the mutation, removed that section of genetically distinct branches, and propagated it. The result is one of the best dwarf maples for warm climates.

Spring color on 'Coonara Pygmy'. The pink margins will fade as the leaves mature.

'Coonara Pygmy' has small bright green palmate leaves (about the size of a quarter), tightly packed on stiff, twiggy branches. The tree is definitely upright, but rounds out with time, and makes a great contrast to red leaved varieties that most people associate with Japanese maples. The fall colors can be a spectacular mix of yellows, oranges, reds, and even pinks and purples.



The chartreuse 'Coonara Pygmy' contrasts nicely with the deep reds of red dissectums like 'Tamukeyama' or 'Crimson Queen'. Photo Credit: JC Raulston Arboretum



The many fall colors of 'Coonara Pygmy' run the full range from bright yellow to orange, red, magenta and even purple.

Most of the specimens we have available today are less than 4' tall and wide at present. We currently have trees in 1, 2, and 5 gallon sizes available for purchase.

FERTILIZATION

We get a lot of questions on the subject of fertilizing maple trees. Since now is the optimal time to be fertilizing, we thought we'd go over some of the most frequently asked questions about "feeding" your trees.

1. "Should I fertilize my Japanese maple, and if so, when and with what?"

Ok. First of all, that's actually 3 questions, the answers to which are:

A: You can if you'd like to, but go easy.

B: Early spring (March or April)

C: A balanced slow-release fertilizer like Osmocote at half the recommended rate on the package.



Going easy on the fertilizer will encourage better branching and the elegant shape most often associated with Japanese maples.

2. "Can you please elaborate on all that?"

Sure. Japanese maples are slow growers, which makes them light feeders. They simply don't need, and can't process the nitrogen that your lawn does, or that you'd use on your vegetable garden.

A little fertilizer can be a good thing in *moderation*. Japanese maples in North Texas will grow from March through early Summer, and usually slow down dramatically once the temperatures start to soar. It's understandable that we want to encourage as much growth in that narrow window as possible, so it's tempting to go a little heavier on the fertilizer. But, too much of a good thing can be really detrimental. Using a slow-release fertilizer will prevent you from overdoing it.

3. "What happens if I over-fertilize?"

Fast acting, high nitrogen fertilizers (like the blue stuff that works great on annuals and vegetables) can cause Japanese maples to dry out and look burned, and can cause rapid growth that is out of scale with the rest of the tree. The growth tends to be woodier, with long, thick growth that doesn't branch very often and has large gaps between oversized leaves. It's not very graceful, and honestly kind of weird looking.

4. "What if I'd rather use an organic fertilizer?"

We've had success with cottonseed meal and with fish emulsion with seaweed.

Organics certainly have their benefits, but it can be harder to tell exactly how much is a proper dose. We tend to stick with the synthetics because they are easier to measure.



It's hard to find a pretty picture of someone fertilizing a tree. So, here's a lovely picture of 'Seiryu' leaves in autumn.

5. "What about root stimulator?"

Meh. Lots of products that are sold as root stimulator are really just a fast acting fertilizer that includes more phosphorus and potassium than nitrogen. We'd recommend just sticking with the slow release stuff, and count on the tree to do its thing in its own time.

6. "What about fertilizing 'Fire Dragon', 'Baby Dragon' and other Shantung Maples?"

These trees are much faster growing and so will welcome more fertilizer. You can use the same Osmocote you use on your Japanese maples (at the recommended rate on the package), or you can use the fertilizer spikes that you hammer into the soil around the drip line of the tree.

You can also fertilize them more often than the Japanese maples. An application in March, one in May, and one in September should be sufficient.



Early fall color on *Acer palmatum*. Not pictured: The gardener that has no doubt taken great care of this Japanese maple by not over-fertilizing it.

7. "My tree looks sickly. Should I fertilize it?"

Nope. Usually, the tree isn't missing any nutrients, so adding fertilizer has little to no effect, and often can actually make matters worse. The best approach is usually to hold off on fertilizing until the following year. What looks like a nutrient deficiency is most often the result of other stresses (e.g. poor drainage, damaged bark, herbicide damage, soil compaction, or inconsistent moisture).



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