



METRO MAPLES

September 2020 Newsletter



INVENTORY UPDATE

Our next big shipment of Japanese Maples from Oregon arrives soon. Details below.

'SUPER DRAGON'

This unique dwarf Shantung maple deserves a spot in your landscape.

MAPLES FOR BONSAI

Which ones we use and why we like them.

INVENTORY UPDATE

Fall is the perfect time to plant a tree, and we always try to time the deliveries from our suppliers to ensure that we are fully stocked when fall arrives.

The recent wildfires in Oregon came within just a few miles of one of our major suppliers, and that has held things up just a little bit, but we do still expect two massive deliveries of beautiful new trees over the next 6-8 weeks.

We will send out an email and update the front page and the 'Inventory' page of our website when the shipments arrive.

We have 'Fire Dragons' and 'Baby Dragons' and 'Super Dragons,' along with Shantung Seedlings and Trident Maples, so if you've got a sunny spot that needs a tree, we've got you covered.



The perfect planting time is just a few weeks away now. New trees will be here just in time!

'SUPER DRAGON'

Acer truncatum 'Super Dragon' is one of several Shantung maples selected and patented by Metro Maples's founder, Keith Johansson.

'Super Dragon' is smaller than an average Shantung, reaching 15-18' tall and wide at maturity. The tree definitely likes to spread out, with strong lateral branching even in its youth.

The most arresting feature of this tree is definitely its color. It begins in spring with a mix of pink and coppery orange with bright lime-green veins.



Spring colors on 'Super Dragon.'

In summer, that bright lime green suffuses the entire leaf, making it one of the brightest green trees in our garden, and can be truly spectacular, especially on cloudy and rainy days.

In fall, the leaves fade to a soft, pale yellow.



Photo credit: Keith Johansson

This cultivar is more sensitive to hot sun than our other Shantungs, so we'd recommend planting 'Super Dragon' in a spot that provides protection from the hot afternoon sun.

We currently have 'Super Dragon' available in 5 and 7-gallon containers. We don't have them in large quantities, and expect them to go pretty quickly. Come get one before they're gone!

Maples for Bonsai

Growing a bonsai tree takes years and years, but if you are the kind of person who enjoys a "process," it can be very rewarding indeed.

Maples make excellent bonsai, and our huge selection of cultivars in small sizes mean that aspiring bonsai artists can choose from any number of colors, shapes and sizes. Below are some of our recommendations for those of you interested in growing maples as bonsai.



These amazing works of art likely took decades to create. These trees are not ours and are not at Metro Maples. But wouldn't it be neat if they were?

Species and Cultivars

Acer buergerianum - Trident maple

The Trident maple is perhaps the best maple for the beginning bonsai artist. This species is native to Asia, and is a very tough, fast growing, resilient tree that responds well to the techniques used in bonsai. When planted in the ground, Tridents will quickly become large trees. The bonsai artist will need to manage that rapid growth carefully through planned periods of unchecked growth followed by pruning and wiring to shape the tree. This means the artist gets lots of opportunity to practice the various elements of bonsai, while working on a relatively forgiving tree.



A very well-maintained small Trident maple bonsai.

Acer palmatum, 'Shin deshojo,' 'Bonfire' and 'Deshojo'

These three mid-sized upright Japanese maple cultivars are all very similar and are prized for their incredibly bright red spring colors, turning coppery bronze and then green in summer, followed by reds and golds in autumn. Their leaves are palmate, star-shaped and fairly uniform, lending a more formal, elegant aspect to the tree.



Spring color on a 'Deshojo' bonsai.

Acer palmatum - Japanese Maple



Japanese maple seedlings are another great choice. This is the standard Japanese maple, without a fancy cultivar name. These trees are also quite resilient and relatively quick growing, though not quite as vigorous as the Trident.

Seedlings are not grafted, which means that we have genetic variability at play. So there will be subtle differences from tree to tree. Some will have larger leaves than others, and you can expect a variety of golds and reds in the fall. They will grow faster than most cultivars, and tend to be more heat and sun tolerant.

For some folks, the presence of a graft scar on the tree is aesthetically undesirable, but for many, having the unique leaf shapes and colors of the cultivars and genetic predictability far outweighs the downside of any visible mark near the root flare.

Acer palmatum 'Oto hime,' 'Kiyohime,' 'Murasaki kiyohime'

The short but laterally spreading dwarf cultivars make great bonsai specimens. Their habit is already dense and twiggy and their natural inclination is to grow wide rather than tall. There are pros and cons to this.

Pro: Their slower growth rate, and compact natural shape mean you don't have to do as much work. Con: You don't get to do as much work, and really the working on the trees is the fun part.



Acer palmatum, 'Shishigashira'

This upright dwarf cultivar is commonly grown as bonsai. It features small dark green leaves with a distinctly curled, ruffled leaf. 'Shishigashira' naturally has a twiggy habit, and outstanding deep red-orange fall color. It's a bit more sculptural by nature than the low-spreading cultivars.



We currently have over 130 different cultivars of Japanese maple, Ginkgo, and Trident maple at Metro Maples. The cultivars listed above are just a few of the most popular varieties used in bonsai. If you're interested in finding the perfect tree for you, we'd love to have you visit the farm.

To schedule an appointment, just email us at metromaples@yahoo.com.



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