



METRO MAPLES

September 2019 Newsletter



TIME TO PLANT!

Fall is the ideal time to plant maples, and we have new inventory available today!

'FIRE DRAGON'TM

This month's featured tree was patented by our founder and is a terrific tree for full sun.

BONSAI BOOK REVIEW

We take a look at a fundamental text for maple and bonsai enthusiasts.

IS IT TIME TO PLANT?

Yes! (Almost.)

The ideal time to plant a maple tree in Texas is just after the heat breaks in fall. To our great dismay, this hasn't quite happened yet. But the days are getting shorter, and we have to believe cooler days (meaning lows in the 60s and highs in the 80s) are ahead.

By planting when it's cooler, you will ensure that your tree will easily adapt to any changes in growing conditions. In addition, planting in the fall gives the tree as much time as possible to grow roots in the ground before temperatures climb again next summer.



Early fall is the perfect time to plant a tree.

In preparation for that ideal planting time, we now have lots of container-grown Japanese maples available for sale that range from 7 to 15 gallons. We've also ordered a literal truckload (20 tons) of larger specimens from our suppliers in Oregon, which will be arriving sometime in mid to late October. Come see us!



This 'Fire Dragon™' photo was taken a few years ago at the home of a Metro Maples customer and friend.

The tree blooms in late March with tiny yellow flowers that are fairly inconspicuous. A couple of weeks later, bright green leaves emerge and persist through summer until turning red in November.



'FIRE DRAGON™'

Acer truncatum 'Fire Dragon™' is a cultivar of Shantung maple first discovered by Metro Maples's founder, Keith Johansson, in 1999.

Shantung maples are not Japanese maples, and will thrive in areas that are too hot and sunny for Japanese maples. Most Shantung maples will turn a bright golden-yellow in fall. 'Fire Dragon™' will turn a deep cardinal red.

'Fire Dragon™' can eventually reach 25-30' tall and wide in 15 years. The growth rate is relatively quick, at 3' per year once it becomes established.



Fall foliage on a group of young 'Fire Dragons™' in our growing area a few years ago.

Shantung maples are 1 of only 6 species of tree designated a Texas Superstar® by the Texas A&M Agriculture Program in 2001 after 12 years of statewide testing. This indicates the tree will perform especially well in Texas with minimal effort in terms of soil preparation, irrigation, and pesticide.

We currently have 'Fire Dragon™' in 2, 7, 10, and 15 gallon containers and will have larger 30, 45, and 95 gallon trees available beginning this Saturday, October 5th. Prices range from \$25 and up. An 8' tall tree in a 15 gallon container is our most popular size and sells for \$195.

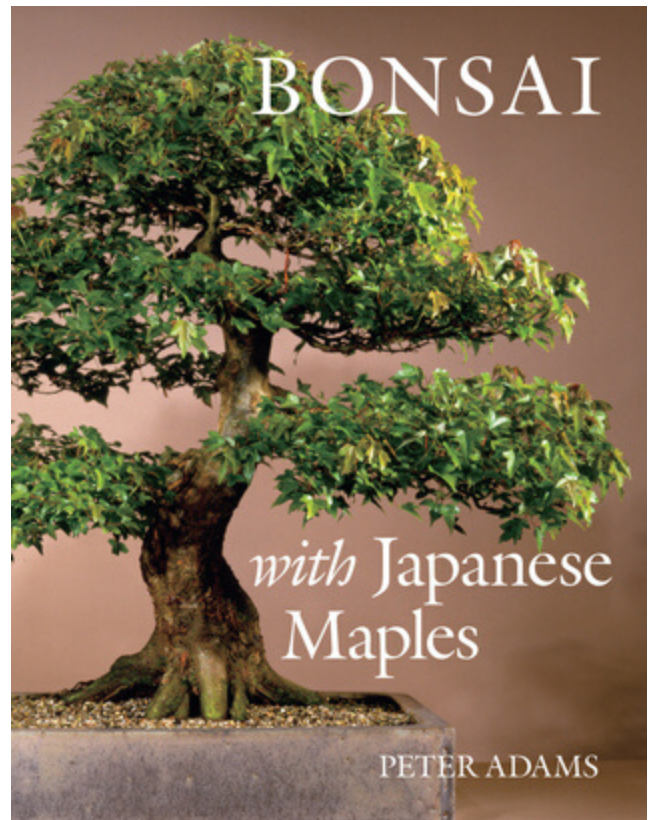
BONSAI BOOK REVIEW

The word 'bonsai' translates to "tree in a pot." The primary goal of bonsai is to create a living sculpture that gives the impression of a large, mature tree in miniature.

There are dozens of tree species commonly grown as bonsai, and among deciduous trees, Japanese maples are among the most popular.

Many customers have expressed interest in growing Japanese maples as bonsai, and we're happy to provide what advice we can, but it's always nice to have a guidebook you can reference over and over.

For many years the book *Bonsai with Japanese Maples* by Peter Adams has remained an ideal reference guide for the maple bonsai enthusiast.



Adams does assume a knowledge of the basics of bonsai cultivation. If you're an absolute beginner, you might want to start elsewhere first. But if you are specifically interested in the techniques used to develop and refine Japanese maple bonsai trees over a period of years, this is an excellent resource.

He first discusses the varieties of Japanese maple cultivars and how specific types are best put to use in bonsai. Attention is



paid to the specific care requirements of Japanese maples, including watering, fertilizing, and repotting techniques. The author then details methods used to develop trunks and roots to create various styles of bonsai -- including group plantings, root-over-rock, and raft styles in addition to the more common formal and informal upright designs.

Adams also devotes an entire chapter to refinement techniques, including how to minimize scars, enhance roots, and graft branches and roots to make (relatively) quick changes in a tree's design, health, and vigor.



Perhaps the most entertaining portion of the book is its final 75 pages, which are dedicated to 23 individual "case studies" of Japanese maple and Trident maple bonsai.

Each of these studies show how all the techniques discussed in earlier chapters are put into practice. There are photos of each tree taken years apart, and sketches of where the author hopes to take the tree in the years ahead.

Bonsai is an art form that requires patience and dedication. A tree can take literally a decade or more to mature and realize its full potential.

And even then, the bonsai artist's work

Photo credit: Bonsai with Japanese Maples, by Peter Adams

isn't done. The cycle of continual refinement ensures that there is always something new for the bonsai practitioner to work on.

As is often the case in life, the more you learn, the more you realize how little you know. This book contains a wealth of information, concisely presented and illustrated. If you think you don't know much now, just wait until you've read this book. You'll be astounded at your own ignorance. It's really great!



This idealized design for a raft-style Japanese maple has inspired many bonsai enthusiasts. This style is decidedly not for beginners, but is a great example of just how far afield from the standard idea of a Japanese maple you can go.



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