Japanese maples (Acer palmatum) and their relatives offer a large group of plants that can be adapted to almost any garden style and situation. In fact, a wonderful garden could be constructed entirely around a collection of maples. Height, habit, leaf form, seasonal color and interesting bark vary widely through the numerous cultivars. This offers opportunities for interplay with other plants.

Maples flourish in humus-rich, well-drained soil. While they are reasonably drought tolerant once established, supplemental water during summer dry spells results in stronger growth and a generally healthier tree. Fertilize in early spring with a balanced fertilizer such as Dr. Earth All Purpose fertilizer. Maples can be pruned judiciously, with an eye to enhancing a plant’s overall shape and natural beauty. If possible, avoid gardening underneath a Japanese maple – damage to the roots can be an entry point for a maple’s greatest foe – the soil-borne fungus called verticillium wilt.

In general, Japanese maples are medium-growing, vase-like trees that grow to 15 to 20 feet tall and 12 to 15 feet wide in about ten years. Over time, they can get much larger. They are adaptable to sun or part shade and are hardy to -10°F. Fall color is usually striking and can be shades of yellow, orange or red.

The following list gives more information on specific cultivars. Many of those with pale or variegated leaves need afternoon shade or filtered light to keep the leaves from burning. The slow-growing cultivars do well in containers. The following list is organized by approximate size: laceleaf varieties, dwarf varieties, small trees, and medium trees. Other species of Japanese maples (Acer japonicum and A. shirasawanum) are listed at the end.

**ACER PALMATUM DISSECTUM (LACELEAF) VARIETIES**

* Acer palmatum dissectum (JAPANESE LACELEAF MAPLE) In general, Japanese laceleaf maples are slow-growing, mounding or cascading small trees with finely dissected foliage. They do very well in containers.

‘Baldsmith’ Height 5-6 feet; width 5-8 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Apricot-salmon new growth turns to green flushed with pink. Very beautiful red-orange fall color.

‘Brocade’ Height 4-5 feet; width 5-7 feet. Sun or part shade. Deep but soft red foliage holds color well. Good fall color—bright red blended with orange.

‘Crimson Queen’ Height 3-6 feet; width 5-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -25°F. Dark red leaves all summer—bright scarlet in fall. Most popular laceleaf maple.

‘Emerald Lace’ Height 6-7 feet; width 7-8 feet. Filtered sun or part shade. Vivid green foliage—good fall color. More vigorous than most laceleaf maples.
'Garnet' Height and width 4-8 feet; vigorous, mounding habit. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Holds dark orange-red leaf color well into the summer. Red fall color.

'Inaba-shidare' Height 4-6 feet; width 5-8 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. One of the darkest purple-red laceleafs—holds color all summer. Brilliant crimson in fall.

'Orangeola' Height 3-5 feet; width 4-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Red color fades a bit in summer, and then turns brilliant orange-red in fall.

'Ornatum' Height and width to 12 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Lacy light foliage emerges an outstanding bright bronze-red. Matures to green in summer, and then turns crimson-red in fall.

'Red Dragon' Height and width 3-4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Deepest red laceleaf maple—perhaps the best red color in any Japanese maple. Scarlet in fall.

'Red Filigree Lace' Height 6-8 feet; width 4-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -5°F. Slow growing, small vase-shaped tree. Perhaps most finely dissected leaves of any variety. Deep purple-red turning light crimson in fall.

'Spring Delight' Medium-growing mounding shrub. Height 4-6 feet; width 5-7 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -15F. Pale green leaves have purple tips. Gold orange in fall.

'Tamukeyama' (BOLDRED LACELEAF MAPLE) Height and width 5-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Very dark purple-red foliage holds color well. Bright scarlet fall color. Wonderful landscape specimen.

'Viridis' (GREEN LACELEAF MAPLE) Height 2-6 feet; width 3-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Intense light green color all summer. Yellow and orange in fall.

'Waterfall' Height 6-8 feet; width 8-10 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Green foliage, darker than 'Viridis.' Gold streaked with red-orange in fall.

ACER PALMATUM SHRUBBY & DWARF VARIETIES (UNDER 8')

'Aka kawa hime' (DWARF CORAL BARK MAPLE) Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 6-8 feet. Likes sun or part shade. A compact form of ‘Sango Kaku’. Lime green leave turn gold and orange in fall. Coral bark is striking in winter. Does well in containers.

'Beni Zuru' (RED SWAN JAPANESE MAPLE) Height 4 feet; width 3-4 feet. Compact bushy form. Summer foliage is variegated pink, yellow, and green. Good red fall color.

'Bihou' Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 7-8 feet; width 3-4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -20°F. Tiny foliage is yellow green; bright golden-yellow fall color. Twigs and branches have vivid coral to yellow bark in winter. Does well in containers.
'Butterfly'  Slow-growing, vase-like, often stiffly upright tree. Height 5-7 feet; width 3-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -5°F. Dainty tree with cream and pale green variegation—in fall, white turns magenta. Does well in containers. **Protect from hot sun.**

'Fjellheim'  Slow-growing, rounded tree. Height 4-5 feet; width 3 feet. Likes sun or part shade. A compact bushy form of ‘Sango kaku’. Hardy to -10°F. Light green leaf turning gold with light red in fall. Coral bark is striking in winter. Does well in containers.

'Golden Falls'  Height 4-6 feet, depending on staking; width 3-4 feet. A seedling of Ryusen with the same unique, cascading form. Can be trained to a desired height, or allowed to weep over a wall or deck, where it will trail up to 20 feet. Protect from hot afternoon sun. Foliage emerges chartreuse with red edges and stems, deepens to golden green. Glorious gold to red fall color. Does well in containers.

'Green Elf'  Slow-growing vase like tree. Height 4-6 feet; spread 3-5 feet. Likes sun to part shade. Foliage emerges light green fuzzed with white, turning dark green in summer. Leaves are large, almost like a full moon maple’s. Bright yellow fall color.

'Hupp’s Red Willow'  (AKA ‘Hubb’s Red Willow’).  Slow growing vase like tree. Height 6-7 feet; width 5-6 feet. Filtered sun or part shade. Hardy to -20°F. Dense and twiggy growth. Strap-like red leaves hold color well. Good fall color. Does well in containers.

'Kamagata'  Slow-growing, vaselike tree. Height 3-4 feet; width 3-4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Red to light green leaves whose edges curves slightly up. Yellow to orange fall color. Does well in containers.

'Kandy Kitchen'  Slow-growing, vaselike tree. Height 5-7 feet; spread 4-5 feet. Likes sun to part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Good dark red color holds well on this dwarf tree. Scarlet fall color; red bark on young branches. Does well in containers.

'Koto no ito'  Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 6-8 feet; width 4-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Narrow green leaves turn shades of yellow in fall. Does well in containers.

'Little Sango'  Height 5 feet, width 3 feet. Very compact, upright dwarf Coral Bark type with dense branching. Light green foliage turns orange and yellow in fall. Winter shoots are vivid red.

'Mayday'  Slow-growing, mounding shrub. Seedling of ‘Mikawa yatsubusa’. Height and width 3-4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Very dense and compact. Leaves overlay each other like shingles on a roof. Foliage emerges peachy pink, turns blonde-green. Red and orange fall color.

'Mikawa yatsubusa'  (Mikawa Dwarf Japanese Maple)  Slow-growing, mounding tree. Height 4-5 feet; width 3-4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Very dense and compact—wonderful shape. Light green leaves overlay each other like shingles on a roof. Wonderful bonsai subject. Fall color shades of red, orange, or yellow, depending on sun.
‘Mikazuki’ Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 7-8 feet; width 3-4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -20°F. Lovely variegated form—pink blushed over white with green veins. Bright orange with green veins in fall.

‘O Jishi’ (COMPACT LION JAPANESE MAPLE) Slow-growing, vase like tree. Height 6-8 feet—spread 4-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -5°F. Uncommon variety; like a dense, compact ‘Shishigashira’. Orange fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Orion’ Slow-growing, dwarf round form. Height and width about 5 feet. Hardy to -10°F. Tiny, deeply cut leaves emerge reddish-brown with prominent veining. Foliage matures to green in summer. Red orange fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Royale’ Slow-growing, dense, upright tree. Height 4-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Foliage red, shading to peachy pink. Brilliant crimson fall color.


‘Ryusen’ aka ‘Ryusei’ Height 4-6 feet, depending on staking; width 3-4 feet. Unique, extremely cascading form. Can be trained to a desired height, or allowed to weep over a wall or deck, where it will trail up to 20 feet. Likes sun. Bright green foliage in summer. Spectacular fall color—bright red over golden-orange base. Does well in containers.

‘Shaina’ Very slow-growing dwarf shrub or rounded tree. Height 4-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. A dwarf, compact sport of ‘Bloodgood’. Becomes dense with maturity. Deep red leaves turn crimson in fall. Does well in containers.

‘Sharp’s Pygmy’ Slow-growing, rounded tree. Height 2-3 feet; width 2-3 feet. Likes sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Small leaves are green with purple overtones. Excellent bonsai specimen. Orange to red fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Shin-deshojo’ Slow-growing, spreading tree. Height 4-6 feet; width 4-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Flaming scarlet new foliage turns reddish green in summer. Red and orange fall color. Good bonsai subject and good in containers.

‘Shishigashira’ Immediately recognizable due to its tight habit and crinkled foliage. Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 4-6 feet; width 2-3 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Bright green leaves turn orange in fall. Among the very last Japanese maples to change colors and drop its leaves. Good patio tree or bonsai. Does well in containers.

‘Skeeter’s Broom’ Slow-growing, narrowly upright tree. Height 4-5 feet; width 3-4 feet. Likes sun. Hardy to -10°F. Bright red foliage turns purple-red; holds color well through the summer. Rich red fall color. Excellent patio plant or bonsai.

‘Winter Flame’ Slow-growing, bushy tree. Like a smaller (7 – 9 feet) ‘Sango kaku’—striking coral bark in winter. Foliage opens lime green, turns mid-green for summer. Fall color a mix of golden yellow, orange, and red. Does well in containers.

ACER PALMATUM SMALL VARIETIES (8-15’)

‘Amber Ghost’ Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 8-12 feet; width 8-10 feet. Likes part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Most vigorous of the ‘Ghost’ series. Leaves start out red, fading to amber before taking on more green tones with distinctive veins. Bright orange-and-red fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Beni Maiko’ (RED DANCER JAPANESE MAPLE) Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 8-12 feet; width 4-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Brilliant, bushy small tree. New leaves fiery scarlet, turning pinkish red, then green with red veins. Luminous pinkish-red fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Beni Schichihenge’ (ORANGE PASTEL JAPANESE MAPLE) Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 10-18 feet; width 8-15 feet. Likes sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Green leaves are edged with a white margin, overlaid with pink and orange tones. Good fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Burgundy Lace’ Medium-growing vase-like tree. Height 10-12 feet; width 4-6 feet. Likes sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Deeply cut burgundy to bronze leaves; laceleaf foliage but taller growth. Bright red fall color. Does well in containers. Protect from hot sun.

‘Emperor I’ (AKA ‘Red Emperor’) Medium-growing, open, airy tree. Height 12-15 feet; width 8-12 feet. Likes sun to part shade. Hardy to -20°F. Similar to ‘Bloodgood’ but holds its red foliage color better into late summer. Crimson in fall.

‘Fireglow’ Slow-growing, vase-like tree. Height 12-15 feet; width 10-12 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -20°F. Scarlet new foliage turns to dark wine-red for the summer; leaves hold color well. Crimson and red fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Hogyoku’ Medium-growing upright tree. Height 12-15 feet; width 6-9 feet. Likes sun to part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Round bright green leaves. Pumpkin orange fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Ikandi’ Slow-growing, upright. Height 8-10 feet, width 4-5 feet. Likes sun or part shade; protect from hot sun. New foliage emerges bright pink, turning green edged with pink and white, then green variegated with white in summer. Gold and orange fall color.

‘Japanese Sunrise’ Medium-growing, upright tree. Height 12-14 feet; width 8-12 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Showy red to yellow stems and bark. In general, ‘Japanese Sunrise’s’ bark is a truer coral than ‘Sango kaku’s’. Green foliage in summer; butterscotch yellow fall color. Fall color best in full sun.
‘Katsura’ Slow-growing, rounded tree. Height and width 10 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Fantastic soft yellow and orange new growth turns green in summer, yellow and orange edged red in fall. Does well in containers.

‘Killarney’ Height 6-10 feet. Very unusual form; branches grow upright then weep at top, giving the tree a vase-like, almost flat-topped form. Green foliage with red margins. Red, pink, and orange fall color. Very sun-hardy.

‘Moonfire’ Medium-growing upright to rounded tree. Height 10-15 feet; width 10-12 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Deep purple-red—holds its color well. Small red flowers in spring followed by red samaras. Delightful crimson fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Orange Dream’ Vigorous-growing, upright tree. Height 12-15 feet—spread 8-10 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Bright orange new growth turns lemon-yellow tipped with red. Slowly turns to yellow green in summer, then bright yellow-gold in fall. Does well in containers.


‘Purple Ghost’ Medium-growing tree. Height 10-12 feet. Sun or part shade. Purple leaves with black veins. Fall color is a fiery combination of scarlet and orange. Does well in containers.

‘Rhode Island Red’ Medium-growing, upright tree. Height 10-12 feet; width 6-10 feet. Likes sun or partial shade. Hardy to 0°F. Bright red in spring, purple red in summer, fiery red in fall.

‘Ruby Ridge’ Medium-growing upright tree. Height 6-10 feet; width 4-6 feet. Likes partial shade. Hardy to 0°F. More shrub like form with large red leaves. Does well in containers.

‘Seiryu’ One of the few laceleaf Japanese maples with an upright habit. Slow-growing, vase-shaped tree. Height 12-15 feet; width 6-10 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Green foliage has a delicate and graceful effect. Light-gold fall color. Does well in containers.

‘Sherwood Flame’ Slow-growing, rounded tree. Height 10-12 feet; width 10-12 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Vigorous, hardy small tree. Rich reddish-purple color holds to late summer. Good red fall color.

‘Shirazz’ Slow-growing tree is upright when young, becomes gracefully arching with age. Height 10-15 feet; width 8-10 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Multi-colored leaves display blends of pink, green, and creamy white. Fall colors are crimson to scarlet.
‘Suminagashi’ Medium-growing vase-like tree. Height 8-10 feet; width 3-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Bright purple-red in spring, becoming very deep maroon, then crimson in fall. Small red flowers followed by red samaras. Does well in containers.

‘Summer Gold’ Medium growing tree. Height 8-12 feet. Sun or partial shade. Three shades of yellow over the seasons: new growth is chartreuse, summer color turns golden yellow, fall turns the palmate foliage to bright yellow. Red twigs and branches highlight the yellow color. Excellent yellow maple for a sunny spot.

‘Tsukushigata’ Medium-growing rounded tree. Height 10-12 feet; width 6-8 feet. Likes sun. Hardy to -10°F. Leaves emerge shining purple, becoming dull purple in summer and crimson in fall. Does well in containers. Leaves turn green in shade.

‘Twombly’s Red Sentinel’ Medium-growing columnar tree. Height 8-14 feet — spread 6-10 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Deep red leaves; bright red fall color.

‘Ukigumo’ (FLOATING CLOUD JAPANESE MAPLE) Slow-growing, upright tree. Height 8-12 feet; width 4-6 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Beautiful landscape specimen — foliage is pastel green touched with pink and white. Variegation varies from year to year; plant tends to be paler in shade. Fall color is apricot to gold. Does well in containers. Protect from hot sun to prevent sunburn.

‘Villa Taranto’ Slow-growing, mounding tree. Height 12-15 feet; width 12-15 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Wonderful ornamental tree. Foliage emerges reddish purple, turns green with reddish shading in summer, orange-gold in fall.

ACER PALMATUM MEDIUM VARIETIES (15+)

‘Arakawa’ (PINE BARK OR ROUGH BARK JAPANESE MAPLE) Medium-growing upright tree. Height 15-20 feet; width 10-15 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -5°F. Green leaves turn yellow in fall. Rough bark turns corky with age.

‘Beni Kawa’ (RED BARK JAPANESE MAPLE) Medium-growing rounded tree. Height 15-20 feet; width 12-15 feet. Likes sun. Hardy to -20°F. Green leaves in summer; yellow fall color. Winter bark is purer red than Coral bark Maple — colors at a younger age. Does well in containers.


‘Gable Glory’ (CHAMELEON MAPLE) Medium growing upright tree. Height 10-15 feet — width 6-10 feet. Best in part shade. Hardy to -10°F. New growth opens bright orange-red, with the color holding up to 8 weeks. Color stays most vivid if tree is in afternoon shade. Foliage continues to change color all summer. Bark is yellowish-orange, especially ornamental in the winter. A colorful plant all year round!
alphabetically within category

‘Lutescens’ Medium growing upright tree. Height 15-20 feet. Sun or part shade. New growth is yellow-green, turning emerald in summer. Glowing golden yellow fall foliage.

‘Osakazuki’ (FLAME-LEAF JAPANESE MAPLE) Fast growing upright tree. Height 15-25 feet; width 10-20 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Rich green in spring and summer—intense crimson fall color. The best for autumn display! Does well in containers.

‘Sango kaku’ (CORAL BARK JAPANESE MAPLE) Medium-growing, vase-like tree. Height 15-20 feet; width 8-12 feet. Sun or part shade (although bark color is better in sun). Hardy to -10°F. Light green leaf turning gold with light red in fall. Coral bark is striking in winter (bark color fades as tree ages). Does well in containers.

‘Tsukasa Silhouette’ Medium-growing columnar tree. Height 15-20 feet; width 4-5 feet. Sun or part shade. Lime green in spring turning bright green, then brilliant red in fall.

OTHER JAPANESE MAPLES


Acer japonicum ‘Emmett’s Pumpkin’ Slow-growing, rounded shrub/tree. Height 6 feet, width 4 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to -10°F. Tangerine new foliage turns green blushed red; orange fall color. Does well in containers.

Acer japonicum ‘Rising Sun’ Slow-growing, rounded tree. Height and width 12-15 feet. Sun or part shade. Hardy to 0°F. Very large full leaves—up to 8 inches across. Excellent red, orange, and yellow fall color. Does well in containers.


Acer shirasawanum ‘Autumn Moon’ Medium-growing rounded tree. Height 8-10 feet; width 6-8 feet. Sun or part shade—cannot take hot sun. Hardy to -10°F. Yellow leaves flush rose in the summer, turning peachy orange in fall.

Acer shirasawanum ‘Kawaii’ Slow-growing, extremely dwarf spreading tree. Height 1-2 feet. This variety is like a small-leafed laceleaf maple. Foliage opens orange, turns plum red in the summer, then brilliant red to deep orange in fall. Hardy to -20°F. Does well in containers.