Japanese Maple

Acer palmatum

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 25 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5b

Japanese Maple in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Japanese Maple
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

The most coveted of all small landscape trees, and with good reason - it has almost the perfect shape, habit, and fall colors; the species can be quite variable, numerous cultivars are available selected for specific attributes

Ornamental Features

Japanese Maple is primarily valued in the landscape for its ornamental globe-shaped form. It features subtle corymbs of red flowers rising above the foliage in mid spring before the leaves. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The lobed palmate leaves turn outstanding shades of yellow, red and deep purple in the fall. The rough gray bark and red branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Japanese Maple is a deciduous tree with a more or less rounded form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned in summer after the leaves have fully developed, as it may 'bleed' sap if pruned in late winter or early spring. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Japanese Maple is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

Japanese Maple will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 25 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 5 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. You may want to keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.