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Magical Maples

{in Pots!}

Make Japanese maple the star of your garden for a captivating show of finely cut foliage and ever-changing color—all neatly flourishing in a portable container.

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Anyone can grow Japanese maples. Pots make it possible. Add a little drama to your decscape with the pendulous branches of a weeping cultivar. Wake up a sleepy patio with one of these petite trees that changes color with the season. Or tote a magical maple pot to the garden to create an instant focal point in a patch of perennials.

Cold hardiness limits the in-ground planting of Japanese maples to Zones 5–8, but container-grown beauties are simple to whisk inside when subzero temperatures hit, extending the planting range as far north as Zone 1. Loved for their striking form and lauded for their year-round beauty, Japanese maples have been tended in containers for centuries in Asia. Planted in the ground, they grow into small trees, but when confined to a pot, they adapt to the size of their home, topping out at 3–6 feet after a decade or more.

As understory trees, Japanese maples dance in the dappled light of overhead foliage—or the shelter of a porch roof or the north or east side of a building. A few hours of morning sun and afternoon shade is perfect, producing brilliant purple, red, chartreuse, and green leaves, depending on the cultivar. Have no fear, because caring for these deciduous delights is as simple as regular watering, along with occasional trimming, fertilizing and root pruning.

CONTAINERS COURTESY OF CAMPANIA INTERNATIONAL (CAMPANIAINTERNATIONAL.COM)
JAPANESE MAPLES COURTESY OF MONROVIA GROWERS (MONROVIA.COM)



FOUR-SEASON SPLENDOR

The reddish leaf stems of this striking, upright Japanese maple foreshadow the hues to come in winter. Aptly named, 'Coral Bark', the young twigs turn a brilliant coral-red color in winter. A tangle of texture-rich foliage anchors the tree in the sea-blue container, a lovely contrast to the light green foliage, which turns golden in fall.

PLANTS

- A 'Coral Bark' Japanese maple
(*Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku')
- B Polka-dot plant (*Hyposmia sanguinolenta*)
- C 'Margama' sweet potato vine
(*Ipomoea batatas* 'Margama')
- D 'Dolce Licorice' coralbells (*Weichera*
'Dolce Licorice')
- E Vancouver Geranium geranium
(*Pelargonium* 'Vancouver Geranium')

RED RADIANCE

The delightful deep red leaves of 'Ever Red' Japanese maple keep their intense color until frost, when they quickly flutter to the ground. Not all red-leaved maples are so stalwart—many lose their good looks in adverse growing conditions. This young tree has yet to fully develop its gracefully weeping habit, but in a few short years the branches will create a curtain of intricate foliage that nearly reaches the ground. Red-tinged companions along with a burst of chartreuse foliage create an exciting understory vignette.

PLANTS

- A 'Ever Red' Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Ever Red')
- B Japanese bloodgrass (*Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra')
- C 'Sweet Caroline Purple' sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'Sweet Caroline Purple')
- D 'Walkabout Sunset' dense-flowered loostem (Lysimachia congestiflora 'Walkabout Sunset')





FLIGHT OF FANCY

Shown in its midsummer finery, the white-edge leaves of 'Butterfly' Japanese maple change color with the season. Newly unfurled spring foliage has a dusty-pink glow. The leaves change to luxurious green with subtle white variegation in summer. And 'Butterfly' bids the growing year adieu in fall with a smoldering scarlet-magenta coat. Its ever-changing color calls for a colorful palette of companion plants.

PLANTS

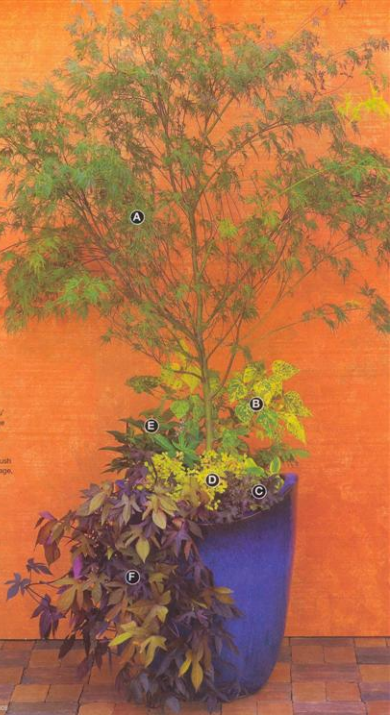
- A 'Butterfly' Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Butterfly')
- B 'Hermann's Pride' deadnettle (*Lamium galeobdolon* 'Hermann's Pride')
- C *Oxalis vulcanicola* 'Mollen Lava'
- D 'Spotlight' Heuchera (*Heuchera* 'Spotlight')
- E Purple fountaingrass (*Pennisetum setaceum* 'Purpureum')

UPWARD BOUND

The pronounced upright growth and strong architectural presence of 'Seiryu' are lightened by its delicate, lacy foliage for a pleasing combination of strength and beauty. The rich green foliage of 'Seiryu' turns purple-brown in fall. The modern-style blue pot, packed with a lush collection of purple and chartreuse foliage, complements the tree's vase shape.

PLANTS

- A 'Seiryu' Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Seiryu')
- B Coleus (Solenostemon cultivar)
- C 'Purple Petticoats' coralbells (*Heuchera* 'Purple Petticoats')
- D Oxalis vulcanicola 'Molten Lava'
- E New Guinea impatiens (*Impatiens* × *hawkeri*)
- F 'Blackie' sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'Blackie')



SPLASH OF STYLE

Intricately cut leaves tumble like water droplets down the perilous branches of "Waterfall" Japanese maple. The tree's mature rounded form will pair perfectly with the stout, round silhouette of the rust-color container. Count on low autumn light making the duo glow, as the foliage turns deep yellow. Upright companions punctuate the cascading branches.

PLANTS

- A "Waterfall" Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* "Waterfall")
- B "Licorice" sweet flag (*Acorus gramineus* "Sweet Flag")
- C Black mondograss (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* "Nigra")
- D "Pink Chablis" deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum* "Pink Chablis")
- E "Sweet Caroline Purple" sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* "Sweet Caroline Purple")



QUICK TIP

In cold climates, potted Japanese maples will need winter protection. After foliage drops in fall, move the plant to an unheated garage or basement where temperatures remain above freezing. Keep the soil moderately moist until returning the plant outdoors in spring. For more tips on growing potted Japanese maples, see page 116.