**Acer japonicum ‘Vitifolium’ Vitifolium Fullmoon Maple**

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen

**Introduction**

Fullmoon maple is a small, deciduous tree that reaches 10 to 15 feet in height and width, creating a smooth, rounded canopy. It fits well into the oriental garden due to the exotic silhouette. The deeply divided, soft green leaves have 9 to 11 lobes and are delicately displayed on thin, drooping branches. The cultivar ‘Vitifolium’ leaves are less divided, providing a coarse texture in the landscape. Leaves take on a beautiful yellow to red coloration in the fall before dropping, making this small, dense plant really stand out in the landscape. Fall color has been described as exceptional. The hanging clusters of showy, purple/red flowers appear in late spring and are followed by the production of winged seeds. The flowers stand out among the maples.

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor; Ryan W. Klein, graduate assistant; and Gail Hansen, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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**General Information**

Scientific name: *Acer japonicum* 'Vitifolium'  
Pronunciation: AY-sir juh-PAW-nick-um  
Common name(s): 'Vitifolium' fullmoon maple  
Family: Aceraceae  
Plant type: tree  
USDA hardiness zones: 4B through 7 (Figure 4)  
Planting month for zone 7: year round  
Origin: not native to North America  
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive  
Uses: near a deck or patio; container or above-ground planter; trained as a standard; bonsai  
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

![Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.](image)

**Description**

Height: 10 to 15 feet  
Spread: 6 to 10 feet  
Plant habit: round  
Plant density: moderate  
Growth rate: slow  
Texture: coarse

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: lobed; parted  
Leaf shape: star-shaped  
Leaf venation: palmate  
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: orange  
Fall characteristic: showy

**Flower**

Flower color: red  
Flower characteristic: showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: oval  
Fruit length: ½ to 1 inch  
Fruit cover: dry or hard  
Fruit color: green  
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; no thorns  
Current year stem/twig color: green  
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

**Culture**

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade  
Soil tolerances: clay; acidic; well-drained; sand; loam  
Drought tolerance: moderate  
Soil salt tolerance: unknown  
Plant spacing: not applicable

**Other**

Roots: usually not a problem  
Winter interest: no special winter interest  
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive  
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

This maple is at home in the residential landscape as well as the commercial setting. Planted near a patio or deck, it will generate many comments from friends and other visitors. It is probably best used as a specimen, planted to attract attention to an area. It should live for at least 20 years. Nice specimens can be viewed at arboreta, but few nurseries currently offer these cultivars for sale. This may change as nursery operators and homeowners discover the trees.

Fullmoon maple can be grown in sun to almost full shade. Nice specimens can be seen growing in the filtered shade of tall, overstory trees, or with 2 to 6 hours of direct sun. Where the sunlight is intense, the tree will benefit from having its roots shaded or mulched to help keep the soil cool. A generous helping of mulch out to the edge of the canopy is beneficial.
**Design Considerations**
As a specimen plant the Fullmoon maple should be located to create a focal point. Background plants should have a simple form and full foliage to create a solid mass that highlights the form of the maple. Low-growing shrubs and groundcover plants with dark green, glossy leaves would contrast well with the light green foliage of the maple plant. Pair with plants with simple forms and fine texture such as mounding grasses with narrow strap blades or the sprawling forms of juniper with fine little needles. White and pink flowers in surrounding plants will highlight the purple/red flowers and red fall color of the foliage.

**Pests and Diseases**
None of major concern except for verticillium wilt.