

Acer japonicum 'Vitifolium' Vitifolium Fullmoon Maple¹

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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.



Figure 2. Full form, fall color—*Acer japonicum* 'Vitifolium': 'Vitifolium' fullmoon maple.

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 1. Full Form—*Acer japonicum* 'Vitifolium': 'Vitifolium' fullmoon maple.

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Figure 3. Leaf—*Acer japonicum* 'Vitifolium': 'Vitifolium' fullmoon maple.

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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

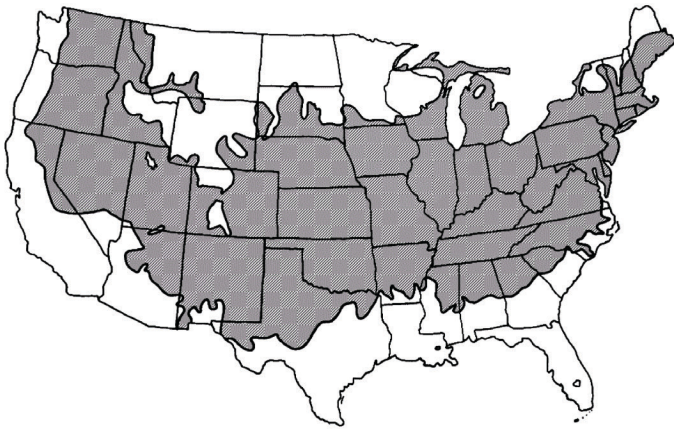


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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.