

Acer palmatum var. *dissectum*: 'Dissectum' Japanese Maple¹

Edward F. Gilman, Dennis G. Watson, Ryan W. Klein, and Deborah R. Hilbert²

Introduction

This Japanese maple has a mounded shape with an ultimate height of about 15 feet and a spread to about 20 feet. The dark red, simple leaves are finely divided into lobes, and the sinuses are so deep that leaves appear to be palmately compound. The slow growth rate makes this nicely suited to residential landscapes. Its popularity is due mostly to the delicate leaves that stay red for most of the summer. Leaves may turn to greenish red in the hot weather in the southern part of its range. The multiple trunks are muscular-looking, picturesque, grey, and show nicely when lighted at night. Fall color is reddish and less striking than other Japanese maples. The globose canopy shape looks best when it is allowed to branch to the ground. Lower foliage branches can be thinned to display the attractive bark and trunk structure.

General Information

Scientific name: *Acer palmatum*

Pronunciation: AY-ser pal-MAY-tum variety die-SEC-tum

Common name(s): 'Dissectum' Japanese maple

Family: *Aceraceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 9B (Figure 2)



Figure 1. *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum*: 'Dissectum' Japanese maple. Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not assessed/incomplete assessment

Uses: container or planter; deck or patio; specimen; Bonsai

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; Ryan W. Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture; and Deborah R. Hilbert, UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center; Department of Environmental Horticulture; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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Crown shape: round, weeping

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

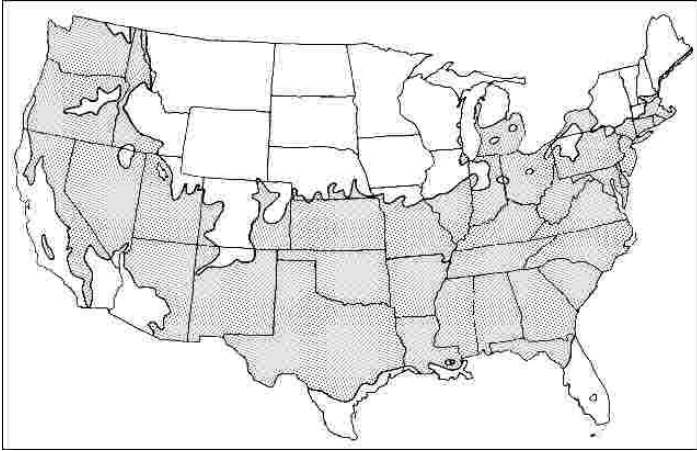


Figure 2. Range

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Figure 3)

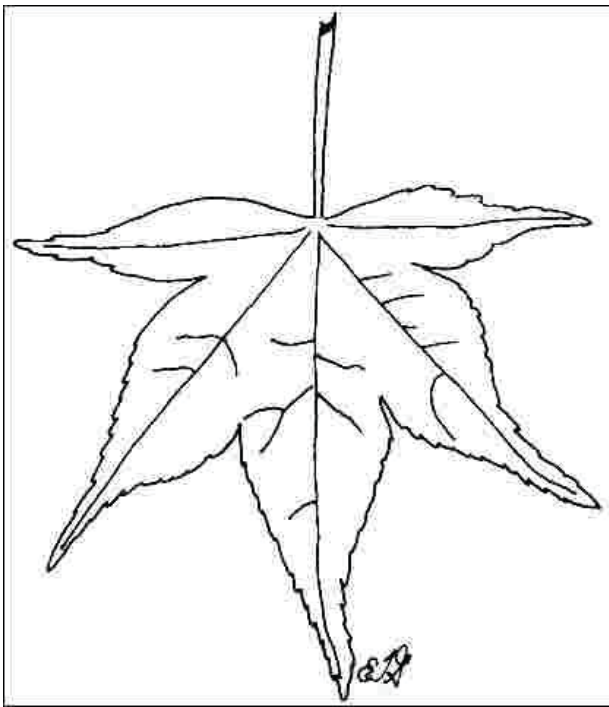


Figure 3. Foliage

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate, lobed

Leaf shape: star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: purple/red

Fall color: orange

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 0.5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green, reddish

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: partial sun or partial shade, shade tolerant

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: yes

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Leaves can scorch in hot summer weather unless they are in some shade or irrigated during dry weather. More direct sun can be tolerated in the northern part of the range. Be sure drainage is maintained and never allow water to stand around the roots. Japanese maples grow fine on clay soils as long as the ground is sloped so water does not accumulate in the soil. They respond well to several inches of mulch placed beneath the canopy. Be sure to clear all turf away from beneath the branches so the lawn mower will not damage the tree.

This cultivar makes a nice specimen for planting in a lawn or low ground cover. Train the trunks and branches so they will not touch each other. Eliminate branches with included (embedded) bark or those which are likely to develop it as soon as possible. This reduces the likelihood of a branch splitting from the tree later when it has grown to become an important part of the landscape. Locate the tree properly, taking into account the ultimate size since the tree looks best if it is not pruned to control size. It can be the centerpiece of your landscape if properly located. Japanese maples have a reputation for transplanting from a field nursery poorly, but root-pruned plants and those from containers should do well.

Pests and Diseases

Poor growth in poorly drained soil. Often planted on raised beds or on high ground in clay soil. Aphids, scales, and borers can be found on the maples. Scorch occurs during periods of high temperatures accompanied by wind. Trees with diseased or inadequate root systems will also show scorching. Verticillium wilt can kill plants.