Firecracker Japanese Maple

Acer palmatum 'Firecracker'



Firecracker Japanese Maple foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 7 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Group/Class: Dissectum

Description:

A superb compact landscape tree that demands a prominent location in the garden; finely cut ruby red new leaves turn burgundy-maroon by late spring, until fall reveals a bright scarlet red; ideal for shrub gardens and small landscapes

Ornamental Features

Firecracker Japanese Maple is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its ornamental upright and spreading habit of growth. It has attractive burgundy foliage with hints of purple which emerges ruby-red in spring. The deeply cut ferny palmate leaves are highly ornamental and turn an outstanding scarlet in the fall.

Landscape Attributes

Firecracker Japanese Maple is an open deciduous tree with a strong central leader and an upright spreading habit of growth. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which can make it a great accent feature on this basis alone.

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.

Firecracker Japanese Maple is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Firecracker Japanese Maple will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 7 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot 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 60 years or more.

This tree does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in partial shade. 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 may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. 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 is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Firecracker Japanese Maple is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.