Acer japonicum ‘Acontifolium’
‘Acontifolium’ Fullmoon Maple

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INTRODUCTION

Full-Moon Maple is a small, deciduous tree which reaches 10 to 15 feet in height and width, creating an irregular, rounded silhouette (Fig. 1). It fits well into the oriental garden due to the exotic silhouette. This cultivar is exceptionally cold hardy, having survived temperatures of 25 degrees below zero. The deeply divided, soft green leaves have 9 to 11 lobes and are delicately displayed on thin, drooping branches. 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 purple/red flowers appear in late spring and are followed by the production of winged seeds.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Acer japonicum ‘Acontifolium’
Pronunciation: AY-ser juh-PAWN-i-kum
Common name(s): ‘Acontifolium’ Fullmoon Maple, Fernleaf Maple
Family: Aceraceae
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 7 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; trainable as a standard; specimen
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 10 to 15 feet
Spread: 6 to 10 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: round; vase shape
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed; incised; 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: red
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower
Flower color: red
Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: elongated; oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

This Maple would at home in the residential landscape as well as the commercial setting. Planted near the patio or deck, it would 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 this cultivar for sale. This may change as nursery operators and homeowners discover the tree.

Full-Moon Maple should be grown in full sun or partial shade. Where the sunlight is intense, the tree will benefit from having its roots shaded to help keep the soil cool.

**Pests**

No pests are of major concern.

**Diseases**

This Maple is susceptible to verticillium wilt.