Acer palmatum ‘Dissectum Atropurpureum’
‘Dissectum Atropurpureum’ Japanese Maple

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

INTRODUCTION

This Japanese Maple has a mounded shape with an ultimate height of about 15 feet and a spread to about 20 feet (Fig. 1). The dark red, simple leaves are finely divided into lobes, and the sinuses and 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 which 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 ‘Dissectum Atropurpureum’
Pronunciation: AY-ser pal-MAY-tum
Common name(s): ‘Dissectum Atropurpureum’
Japanese Maple
Family: Aceraceae
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; specimen
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

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

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-26, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed; serrate
Leaf shape: star-shaped
Leaf venation: palmate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: purple or red
Fall color: orange
Fall characteristic: showy

**Flower**

Flower color: red
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: elongated
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: red

**Fruit characteristics**: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; 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; showy trunk; no thorns

**Pruning requirement**: requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage**: resistant

**Current year twig color**: green; reddish

**Current year twig thickness**: thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement**: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade

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

**Drought tolerance**: moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance**: none
Soil salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
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

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.