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# How to Grow Flowering Maples: The Complete Chinese Lantern Guide



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# Planting, Growing, and Caring for Flowering Maples

By [Carol Connare](#)

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Flowering maple, Chinese lantern, Chinese bellflower, Indian mallow, whatever you choose to call this stunning plant, it is sure to make a statement wherever it is planted! Typically grown as an annual, it is also becoming a popular houseplant! Learn how to plant, grow, and care for the flowering maple.

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## About Flowering Maples

Pssst! The flowering maple isn't a maple at all! In fact, the flowering maple is a member of the mallow family, which includes [hibiscus](#), [hollyhock](#), [okra](#), and [rose of Sharon](#), and boasts similarly shaped flowers up to 3 inches in diameter that butterflies and hummingbirds love to visit. [Read about more plants that attract hummingbirds.](#)

We can thank breeders for the beauty and variety in the hundreds of cultivars: It's a houseplant and an outdoor plant. It's

gated. It bears blooms of salmon, orange, red, white, yellow, and bi-colors—in some cases, flowers appear in several colors on one plant. Some cultivars bloom in summer and fall, while some more recent hybrids bloom year-round. (Note that leaves can cause minor skin irritation on contact.)

Also known as parlor maples, flowering maples are semitropical, frost-tender perennial shrubs that are winter-hardy in Zones 9 and 10. They can be treated as annuals or overwintered elsewhere and are also suitable for container planting (both indoors and out!).



Photo: GOR Photo

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- [How to Grow Rose of Sharon](#)
- [How to Grow Ranunculus: The Complete Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Million Bells: Your Guide to Trailing Petunias](#)

## PLANTING

Propagation can be by seed or cuttings. Scarify seeds 24 hours before planting (nick or scratch with a fingernail file or sandpaper) to speed germination. Sow on the surface of damp seed-starting mix 8 to 10 weeks before the last frost, barely covering them. Maintain the temperature at 75°F and keep the seeds moist. Expect germination in 14 to 21 days.

Softwood tip cuttings can be taken at any

season and, if desired, discarding the parent plant.) Prepare a damp seed-starting mix. Dip the 4-inch cutting into rooting hormone and plant. Set aside in a warm, bright room. Provide moderate bottom heat, if desired, to speed rooting.

Flowering maples are not picky about soil, but they perform best in rich, well-draining soil amended with compost. [Check out our guide to composting at home.](#)

Water well and keep constantly moist but not soaking or standing in water.

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Provide full sun to partial shade, depending on the variety.

Feed every 2 to 4 weeks, using a fertilizer high in phosphorous—to promote flower production—at half-strength. For bushier plants, prune occasionally.

## **Overwintering Flowering Maples**

If overwintering outdoor plants indoors, provide intense bright light and cool (50° to 60°F) temperatures at night. With sufficient light, many will bloom throughout the winter. Avoid fertilizer and water only enough to keep the soil slightly moist, such as once per month. Note that overwintering can result in a more vigorous plant in the following year.

## **Flowering Maples in Containers**

Pinch the tops of the branches to encourage a compact habit and to avoid leggi-

bloom best when pot-bound. Flowering maples are fast-growing, so repot to a slightly larger container every year or two.

#### ADVERTISEMENT



*Flowering Maples do well in containers and also make great houseplants!*

**Tvnes**



- **‘Bella’** series: compact (15- to 18-inch) plants; seeds are readily available
- **‘Kristen’s Pink’**: 12 to 16 inches tall; 3-inch-wide, bell-shaped flowers
- **‘Souvenir de Bonn’**: 6 to 10 feet tall; salmon-orange flowers with red veining; leaves edged in creamy white; prune or pinch branches for shorter plant
- **‘Tiger Eye’**: 6 to 8 feet tall; pendulous yellow flowers with red veining evocative of lanterns; prune or pinch branches for shorter plant

## GARDENING PRODUCTS



- Abutilon's other common names include Chinese lantern, Chinese bellflower, and Indian mallow, although very few species are native to Asia.
- Variegation in flowering maple's foliage is caused by Abutilon mosaic virus, which is transmitted in cultivation by grafting or contaminated tools and in nature by the silverleaf whitefly. However, the virus does the plant no harm.
- According to [Wisconsin Horticulture](#), "Flowering maples were popular during the Victorian era, later fell out of favor in the gardening world, but have returned to modern gardens in a plethora of forms."

**FLOWERS**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Carol Connare**

As the 14th Editor-in-Chief of The

useful, and entertaining matter”  
for the annual Almanac as well as  
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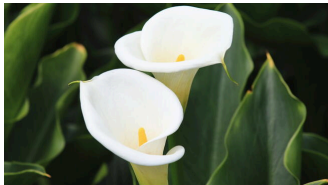
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