

## Care guide – Acer Palmatum

The acer palmatum bonsai is one of the favorite species of bonsai lovers, much appreciated for its original forms. Unlike the acer buergerianum whose leaf only has 3 lobes (trident), depending on the variety or cultivar, the Acer Palmatum bonsai has 5 to 7 lobes (tips).

It is the most traditional bonsai in a collection, originating in Japan (in Japanese the acer palmatum is called YAMA MOMIJI) is deciduous and its ramification is also exceptionally delicate, which allows you to appreciate the structure of the tree in winter. We found several hundred varieties and cultivars of acer palmatum with the same particularity of having green leaves (or bright red in the case of the acer Palmatum Deshojo) in early spring, being replaced by the splendid yellow-orange coloration until dark red in autumn. We recall that the "variety" is an artificial population, reproducible, homogeneous and stable in its genetic characteristics and distinct from other varieties. It is a true spectacle of colors at the end of summer, which delights the owners of bonsai acer palmatum and lasts until very close to Christmas depending on the region and the weather conditions of the year.

### Location

Japanese maple is a plant that should be grown outdoors. It has to feel the passing of the seasons to be able to live, and also to live well. If kept indoors, or if it is protected from low temperatures, it will weaken and eventually die. But it also has to be in semi-shade, in an area where the sun doesn't hit it directly and where it can be protected from the dry wind.

### Soil

Requires porous soils that do not form puddles. It doesn't resist drought, but excess water hurts much more. For this reason, I advise mixing pumice and kanuma at 50%. Another option is 70% akadama with 30% kiryuzuna.

## Watering

As the substrate is light and loses moisture quickly, watering should be frequent. In times of heat and with little or no rain, we should water practically daily, and even twice or more depending on the characteristics of our climate. During the rest of the year we will water a little less, but always paying attention to the humidity of the substrate. In addition, it is very important to use rainwater or lime-free water. As it is an acidophilus plant, if it was watered with calcareous water, its leaves would turn yellow, as its roots could not obtain the iron because the limestone blocks it, making it inaccessible to the plant. If you have no choice but to use the faucet and it has a lot of limestone, add a few drops of lemon or vinegar, making sure the pH (acidity level) does not drop below 4. This can be done with a meter. digitally or with the strips. of pH that they sell in hardware stores, for example.

## Pruning

There are two types of pruning: structural that will take place at the end of winter, and maintenance that will have to be done throughout the year. The first is, of course, more drastic. It consists of cutting all the branches that come out of the style you want to give (or that has already been given to you), as well as cutting the ones that are getting long. On the contrary, the second one is a little softer, because all you do is eliminate the green stems: shoots from the trunk, branches that sprout in unwanted places, ... Also, so that it branches more and underneath you can remove the first 2-3 leaves of each branch.

## Wiring

Wiring is a technique that must be done carefully. Japanese maple grows fast, so if left unchecked, there is a risk of getting into the bark, leaving a mark that will make it quite ugly. To avoid this, what you do is cover it with paper before using it to place the branches wherever you want.

## Repotting

In general, it should be repotted every two or three years, removing 1/3 of the roots and also trying to carefully eliminate dead, injured or malformed roots.

The transplant will be carried out before sprouting, taking care that, in the period after transplanting and before the new sprouts appear, the soil does not become soggy, as this factor could cause the roots to rot.