

Tree Profile: Trident Maple - *Acer buergerianum*

General information: The trident maple is native to eastern China and Japan. It is in the family of Aceraceae and is a very popular species for bonsai, due to its small, three-toothed leaves, a thickening trunk, generally hardiness, and hefty, gnarled rootage conducive to root-overrock style.

Lighting and Temperature: Full sun or partial shade throughout the year but will need protection from hot winds.

Watering: Daily throughout the growing season, easing off in winter. Keep the soil moist but well drained. Watch that the soil doesn't stay continually wet over particularly rainy winters.

Feeding: Recommended from spring to early autumn once a week to every three weeks once buds appear, and then tapering off the feeding schedule in summer. Do not spray the leaves! Note that fertilizing and excess watering after summer may adversely affect autumn colours.

Pruning and wiring: Shorten new shoots on established branches once they have grown out to 3 or 4 pairs of leaves in late spring to two sets of leaves, and continue doing this throughout the growing season. Remove large leaves throughout the growing season to enable light to reach the inner branches. Leaf pruning should not be more than one third at a time, a total leaf prune is not recommended in consecutive years. For strong trees, total defoliation may be performed in late spring—some growers defoliate up to 3 times over the growing season! Wiring can be done any time during growth, but take care as old woody branches are brittle.

Propagation: From seed, air-layered, or grown from both hardwood and softwood cuttings. Softwood cuttings in summer, use heal cuttings for better results. Air layering may be done in spring and early summer. Can take a long time to root!

Repotting: In spring, before buds open. Roots grow very quickly, so

annual repotting may be necessary for young trees; older trees tend to need repotting every 2-3 years. Position the roots during repotting!

Pests and diseases: Generally pest and disease free, but are vulnerable to caterpillar attack. If you have poor air circulation or dry roots, powdery mildew might develop.

Styles: Informal Upright, Slanting, Cascade, Semi-cascade, Literati, Curved-trunk, Broom, Clump, Group planting and Saikei. Some species suitable for bonsai:

Many varieties are available and several interesting and rare cultivars have been developed as well, including 'Goshiki Kaede' (striking pink and green variegation), 'Kifu Nishiki' (roundish, almost un-lobed leaves), 'Mino Yatsubusa' (dwarf with long, narrow leaves) 'Mitsubato Kaede' (distinctive cork-like trunk) and 'Naruto' (strongly incurved leaf surface).



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