Snavely's GARDEN CORNER

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Lions Head Japanese Maple

Acer palmatum 'Shishigashira'



Lions Head Japanese Maple foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5b

Description:

An unusual, bold addition to the garden; deeply curled and crinkled bright green leaves are held in close knit bunches, adding interest; develops its fall color much later in the season than most other varieties, prefers a sheltered location



Lions Head Japanese Maple
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Lions Head Japanese Maple is primarily valued in the landscape for its ornamental upright and spreading habit of growth. It features subtle corymbs of burgundy flowers rising above the foliage in mid spring before the leaves. It has attractive green deciduous foliage which emerges red in spring. The crinkled palmate leaves are highly ornamental and turn outstanding shades of gold and crimson in the fall. The rough gray bark and red branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Lions Head Japanese Maple is an open deciduous tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which can make it a great accent feature on this basis alone.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned in summer after the leaves have fully developed, as it may 'bleed' sap if pruned in late winter or early spring. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Lions Head Japanese Maple is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- *Accent*
- *Shade*
- *Mass Planting*

Planting & Growing

Lions Head Japanese Maple will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. You may want to keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.



Lions Head Japanese Maple in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder