

The Japanese Maples (*Acer palmatum*)

Japanese maple bonsai need a cool moist climate and are therefore quasi impossible to grow satisfactorily in the dry, hot regions of Africa. In areas where their leaves remain unblemished, green Japanese maples are at their most beautiful in their soft, red spring apparel. The red Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum atropurpureum*) has a weak rootage when grown from seed. It is therefore often grafted onto green Japanese maple stock. Unfortunately, the union produces a visible blemish in the grafted



area, especially if the difference in diameter between the stock and the scion is great. Grafting should therefore never be done high up the trunk. Red maples lose their vivid scarlet colour and revert to green when kept in the shade, something which poses a problem in places where the sun is very hot.

Some varieties of Japanese maples never seem to reduce their inter-nodal length no matter how much and how often one nips and prunes. The fan or feather leaved maples (*Acer palmatum dissectum*) are notorious for this bad habit.