

A master's view on maple trends

Posted by: [Sunset](#), January 31, 2011 in [Ornamentals](#) , [People](#) , [Sources](#)

By [Jim McCausland](#), *Sunset Magazine*



After nearly 20 years growing and selling maples through [Mendocino Maples](#) nursery, Robert Jamgochian has developed a solid instinct for what gardeners love. These days, maples with striped or peeling bark are high on his list. Following are some favorites.



Paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*, right) grows 25 ft. tall and is covered with peeling, papery bark that looks especially striking when the sun is behind it. This tree leafs out late in spring, with leaves divided into three coarsely toothed leaflets—not the classic maple leaf at all. But in fall the color is good. Overall, it's a choice garden tree.



'Bihou' Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Bihou', above left) has an upright form, growing about 10 ft. tall. Bark runs from yellow to apricot, and fall leaves are mostly in the same range. Like so many golden-leaved plants this one does best in partial shade.



Snakebark maples come in several versions.

David's maple (*A. davidii*, left) grows 20 to 35 ft. tall, has green and silvery-white striped bark, and yellow, red, purple, and orange fall color.

'Erythrocladum' striped maple (*A. pennsylvanicum* 'Erythrocladum', center) is an Eastern American native with pink-and-white striped bark and golden-yellow fall color. This one is slow growing, reaching only about 8 ft. in 10 years.

***Acer rubescens* 'Silver Cardinal'** has pink and purple striped bark, grows about 10 ft. in 8 years.

Robert personally grafts most of the maples he sells. That amounts to thousands of trees representing 250 species and varieties.

He's obviously a man of great patience—a fact also proven by his ability to answer calls like one he got from a customer one autumn who reported that an otherwise healthy maple had just lost all its leaves. A high-school biology teacher, Jamgochian saw it as teachable moment and handled it, I'm sure, with as straight a face as possible.