**Storrington Horticultural Society September 2023 meeting report**

A packed audience of members and guests welcomed Miles Hayward a local specialist grower of Japanese Maples to their meeting who gave a very informative and interesting talk on these plants including many helpful tips on successful growing of this beautiful plant.

Miles studied Botany at Reading University and then started his practical experience working at specialist hardy and exotic nursery Big Plants and it was here that he gained a wide practical knowledge of plants from bamboo’s, Palms, Olive Trees and other ornamental trees and shrubs.

This also gave him a greater understanding into local garden conditions, soil types and

micro-climates, this knowledge is essential he says in making the correct choices for the transfer of young plants to gardens which helps ensure greater success for the plants themselves in their new surroundings.

The Japanese Maple has a long History and there are in fact over 250 cultivars of Japanese Maples The Acer palmatum forms of this plant has been part of Japanese history for centuries. It is believed the first recorded plant dares from the 7th century. Centuries of refining different cultivars have resulted in the distinct differences of size, leaf shape and colour we see today.

Dr Thunberg christened the species named palmatum after the hand (palm) like shape of its leaves. Japanese Maples continued to change and grow with the tallest species of just over 30ft and the smallest a diminutive 1.5ft. Each suited to specific growing and climate conditions but overall a hardy low maintenance tree

Miles gave few general guides to selecting the right Maple/Acer and how to grow it if you are considering keeping it in a container but they were only a guide as it is also essential to take note of soil type and condition as well local conditions and any special circumstances regarding location of the property where the Maple is to be planted.

There are species designed to thrive in almost every soil condition however none do well in overly boggy conditions.

**1**. It is important that the container is the right size to start this should be twice the size of the root ball. Much larger gives too much soil around the root which increases the chances that it will become saturated making the plant susceptible to root rot.

**2**. Acers have shallow roots which require plenty of oxygen so drainage is important to prevent water lo

**3**.Think about where you are going to site your plant. Acers are hardy but as a general rule grow best in a sheltered spot away from strong winds As a guide Green Maples can tolerate a certain amount of sun but are best kept in dappled shade. Red and purple Acers need sun to develop their dark hues, but not too much, as they could scorch in the summer sun and are best given some shade during the day to prevent scorching of the foliage

**4.** Only prune if necessary most maples in pots have a naturally elegant open structure and shape. These plants are dormant from November to January so this is the best time to prune removing badly placed or crossing to help encourage a good shape and open structure.

The meeting closed with a raffle and light refreshments. Our next meeting is being held as usual at the Storrington Village Hall on 21st October when Paul Patton will be presenting ‘Autumn Aspirations’ looking forward to Spring commencing 7.30pm when it will be our AGM followed by a talk by Felicity Lewis on, The Versatility and sustainability of black sheep’s wool.

Michael Webber

Web Site: storringtonhorti.org.uk