

The trident maple

Acer buergerianum, Acer trifidum.

Family: Aceraceae.

Origin: Cold regions of the northern hemisphere. The acer trifidum in particular is from western China.

The two species, acer buergerianum and acer trifidum look very similar, the leaves with the three extensions are light green in spring and summer and turn orange in autumn. The beige trunk grows vertically to a height of 12 meters. It presents a beautiful light gray bark.

Light: The maples are able to resist direct sun exposition but if not necessary, in very hot summers they should be placed in mid shadow.

Pruning and cleaning: Pinching: Pinch the tips leaving only two of them. **Pruning:** Prune the leaves that appear to be too big from spring to autumn. This kind of acers are not defoliated completely. Branches are cut to a 1/3 of their original length to keep the tree in shape. In February, form should be given to the tree cutting the branches which disturb the main structural aspect.

Temperature and exposure: Acers should be protected from freeze. As a counterpart they support perfectly high temperatures with direct sun, as I already mentioned in the paragraph above.

Repotting / Soil: Repot every two to three years eliminating the half to 2/3 parts of the fine roots and plant in a bigger pot. Be always sure to eliminate dry roots. I prefer earth colored pots with circular and semicircular forms. The mixture of soil I normally use is composed of 3/6 of compost, 1/6 of humus and 2/6 sand. Very acid soils should be avoided.

Wiring: The main season for wiring acers is from June to August. Only the big branches are wired with care, rest of modeling is done by pruning.

Watering: Water abundantly in spring and summer and reduce the quantity in winter. Be sure to shower or vaporize the trees several times a day.

Fertilizer: Organic solid fertilizer must be applied starting in March, reducing the dose during the hot summer days and stopping completely at the end of November.

Diseases: Acers can be affected by a whole bunch of diseases and parasites, a lot of them can be avoided keeping air humidity as high as possible. I have had aphids and red spider mite which I eliminated keeping the whole tree under water for two days.