



## Book Review by Margaret Hodgson

### **Japanese Maples (Second Edition) Momiji and Kaede** by J.D. Vertrees

189 pages, approx. 134 plates colour photos, with good descriptions of all the various cultivars. Appendices include *Japanese Names and their Meanings, Cultivar Names Not Elsewhere Described, Guide to Use and Character, Bibliography and Index*. Copyright 1987 Timber Press, Portland Oregon. ISBN 0-88192-048-7. \$40.00

**The late J.D. Vertrees** was one of the world's acknowledged authorities on Japanese maples, and his collection of rare and unusual cultivars of *Acer palmatum* made his nursery in Roseburg, Oregon, a mecca for maple enthusiasts throughout the world. This definitive book incorporates the results of his extensive research efforts in nomenclature and taxonomy, propagation, and cultivation.

His work led to several important awards, including the 1978 Special Achievement Award from the Oregon Association of Nurserymen, the 1980 Citation for Horticultural Research from the American Horticulture Society, the 1980 Thomas Roland Gold Metal from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and the 1981 Citation for Distinguished Horticulture Achievement from the Oregon Federation of Garden Clubs. In addition to this classic book, he wrote many articles in leading horticultural publications, and it was at his urging in 1976 that D.M. van Gelderen, P.C. de Jong, H.J. Oterdoom, and J.R.P. van Hoey Smith started their collaboration on a definitive treatment of genus

*Acer* that was to result in the 1994 publication of *Maples of the World*, also published by Timber Press.

J.D. Vertrees died in Roseburg, Oregon, in 1993 at the age of 77.

**Momiji** and **Kaede** are words used by the Japanese to indicate the species and cultivars of *Acer*. Academically, the word "Kaede" is more correctly applied. However, in horticultural use both "Momiji" and "Kaede" are used. "Momiji" is applied to those maples such as *A. palmatum* and refers to the leaves as "Little baby extends his tiny hands", those maples which have deeply separated lobes. "Kaede" stems from the ancient language term "Kaerude" or "Kaeru" = frog or hand and the larger lobed leaves of most other maples are called "Kaede" maples.

**Japanese Maples** is organized into five chapters followed by the appendices, bibliography and Index. In **Chapter 1, Character and History**, Vertrees gives an interesting outline of What is a Japanese Maple, Momiji and Kaede, The Character of Japanese Maples, Variegation, In Regard to Fu (dots, specks, marks on leaves), History of Japanese Cultivars, Old Literature on Japanese Maples. **Chapter 11, Taxonomy and Nomenclature**, discusses the taxonomy, nomenclature, difficulties and confusions, subdivisions of *Acer palmatum*. **Chapter 111, Culture**, brings into consideration Culture in the Garden and gives practical advice of locations for Japanese maples, their use in the landscape, their requirements to thrive. The author has described the method of planting, the soils, moisture, fertilizer needs, container growing and insect and pest problems. In **Chapter IV, Propagation**, Vertrees has covered many methods of propagation. Japanese Maples are produced primarily from seed and by grafting. Other methods used in a limited way include production from rooted cuttings, budding, and layering. The author gives a good description of these methods in this chapter. **Chapter V, The Cultivars Displayed**, one is treated to a very good coverage of How to "Read" Cultivars, and then the chapters follows through with the Cultivars and Selections of *Acer palmatum* with accompanying pictures with the descriptions. The author has a well-organized section on the Palmate Group, Dissectum Group, Deeply Divided Group, Linearilobum Group, Dwarf Group, Semi-Dwarf Group, Variegated Group, Unusual Feature Group, New Hybrids, Cultivars and Selections of *Acer japonicum*, Other *Acer* species from Japan.

The Appendices, bibliography and index complete the text.

**A useful book to read**