

5

PLANT INDEX

Choosing the right plant for the right position and the right function takes skill and practice but it is also one of the most enjoyable aspects of creative gardening. This index gives you clues on where each plant comes from, what kind of climate and microclimate it enjoys and how to use each plant to its best potential.

Drought ratings: Each plant in this index is given a drought rating as a guide to the kind of dry it will endure:

Tough: plants which tolerate seasonal water deficit but may benefit from a modest amount of irrigation during very hot weather to keep them looking happy.

Very tough: plants which withstand long – but not indefinite – periods of water deficit.

Super tough: plants adapted to extended periods of water deficit such as in semi-arid climates.

Trees

Acer – maples

Origin

The maples are not a group of plants you would expect to see in a book on plants that

like dry conditions. Most gardeners are familiar with the beautiful Japanese maples which come from wet, humid, woodland conditions in Japan and China. But maples are also native to a range of different northern hemisphere climate types including very cold, northerly climates and some quite dry regions, too.

Season of interest

Maples are deciduous. They excel during the autumn when they have some of the most spectacular colours of all trees.

Garden uses

Maples are a useful size for small gardens. The upright selections are particularly good for narrow spaces like driveways.

Cultivation

Unlike the more familiar Japanese maples, the species listed below are very tolerant of poor soils, including heavy clays and alkaline soils. They prefer full sun or light shade.

Varieties

A. buergerianum can grow up to 9 × 6 m but is usually seen at 4 × 3 m. It is known as the