



TOP: DWIGHT CASWELL, COURTESY OF WILDWOOD FARM NURSERY &amp; SCULPTURE GARDEN

# AUTUMN GLOW

WITH THEIR FIERY FOLIAGE, JAPANESE MAPLES CREATE A FESTIVE SHOW LEADING UP TO THE YEAR'S END. BY LYDIA LEE

**A**t Sonoma Valley's Wildwood Farm, fall arrives in a blaze of color, thanks to the hundreds of Japanese maples at this nursery and sculpture garden. Cultivated since the 17th century in Asia, these trees are extremely adaptable and do well even in sunny Southern California. "You don't need to go to the East Coast to see the fall color," says Sara G. Monte, who co-owns the nursery with husband Ric. "Japanese maples turn these marvelous shades of red and gold."

With more than 250 varieties to choose from, Japanese maples inspire passionate collecting. Many feature the classic maple shape (like *Acer palmatum* 'Peaches & Cream', at left), but others

have lacy leaves ('Dissectum'), trailing foliage ('Koto no ito') and red bark ('Beni kawa'). Young trees need partial shade to flourish; when mature, they can handle full sun.

One of Monte's favorites is 'Hogyoku' ("jewel" in Japanese), which turns a pumpkin-pie

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orange in the fall. You can see it on one of Wildwood Farm's garden tours, held during the foliage season; and on November 4, there's also a special Saturday-afternoon tea tasting at 1:30 p.m. 10300 Sonoma Hwy., Kenwood, 707-833-1161, [wildwoodmaples.com](http://wildwoodmaples.com). ■