

## Side Shearing to Increase Shade Tree Quality

### James Peckosh

A. McGill & Son, P.O. Box 70, Fairview, Oregon 97024

### E.B. Gee, III

Heartland Nursery, 311 Main Street, New Madrid, Missouri 63869

In the spring of 1988 a box of 500, 3-in. tall, tissue-cultured trees—two hundred fifty each of *Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King' and *A. rubrum* 'Autumn Flame'—was purchased from A. McGill & Son and split between James Peckosh and E.B. Gee, III.

Because of the limited space, James Peckosh planted his trees in root-control fabric containers, side by side. His trees grew very fast in height and became whippy and top heavy. To reduce top weight, and avoid having to stake the trees, he sheared the side branches back to two sets of leaves. The tops were never cut back. The results were enhanced stem taper, increased caliper, increased overall growth, and elimination of staking.

E.B. Gee's trees were grown in a more conventional manner. He planted his trees 4 ft apart and 10 ft between rows. The trees that were side sheared were twice as large in 2 years as those that were not. Both groups were watered and fertilized in the same manner. Heartland Nursery has successfully used this technique of pruning since the spring of 1989 on the following trees: *Acer palmatum*, *A. palmatum* 'Oshu-beni', *A. platanoides* cultivars, *A. rubrum* cultivars, *Cercis canadensis* cultivars, *Malus* cultivars, *Nyssa sylvatica*, *Prunus* cultivars, *Pyrus calleryana* cultivars, and *Quercus* species.

Heartland Nursery prunes once in mid-May, once in mid-June, and once in January.