

Trees for Every Space

When it comes to selecting the right tree for your yard there are many factors to consider. Climate, space and desirable traits should be researched before selecting a tree. Often homeowners find a tree at a cheap price or with cute flowers on the tag and purchase it—thinking about the spot they'll plant it afterwards. The other common mistake we see is when homeowners or developers plant the same handful of trees in entire neighborhoods. Planting so many of the same tree is a recipe for disease and pest outbreaks. To select a tree without thinking of its permanent home will likely create work for you in years to come. You may end up battling to trim a tree too large for its space or losing a tree meant for a warmer climate. Take time to select the right tree for your yard and if you're planting more than one tree—diversify!

Small Deciduous Trees (Usually under 20 feet tall)

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance')

Serviceberry or juneberry trees like full sun to light shade and are infrequently affected by pests. The mature height of the serviceberry is 15-25 feet with a mature spread (the width of the tree) of 15-20 feet. Notable qualities of the serviceberry are their red-purple-black fruit that develop in June. These fruit are edible but as a bird favorite it may be better considered as a way to bring wildlife into your yard. The spring flowers (often pink or white) are another enjoyable trait of the tree as is the yellow to red fall color. A potential downside to the serviceberry is its tendency to sucker, or produce small trees from the base. This issue can be treated with early spring pruning if suckering occurs.

Chinese Fringetree (*Chionanthus retusus*)

The Chinese fringetree likes full sun to light shade with a mature height of 15-25 feet and a canopy width of 10-25 feet. This tree is unlikely to be significantly affected by any major pests. In the summer the fringetree has dark green foliage with white, fringe-like flowers in mid-May. The young stems of the tree have semi-exfoliating bark (bark that peels, giving the trunk visual interest) and the blue to purple fruit are desirable to birds. The Chinese fringetree is pH adaptable and heat tolerant once established.

Common Smoketree (*Cotinus* spp.)

Trees in the *Cotinus* genus prefer full sun and are tolerant of high pH soils and drought. These trees are unlikely to be affected by any major pests. The average height of these trees is between 10-15 feet with a canopy width of 10-15 feet. Some cultivars may have purple and green leaves and all produce pink or white flowers that have a fluffy appearance. The American smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*) has a rounded habit with green foliage and a spectacular orange to red fall color. The standard smoketree (*Cotinus coggygria*) is a rounded specimen with the youngest shoots producing the most color.

Medium Deciduous Trees (20-40 feet tall)

Goldenraintree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*)

Goldenraintree's prefer full sun and will tolerate high pH and drought. With a mature height of 30-40 feet and canopy width of 30-40 feet, this tree needs room to grow but is large enough to provide significant shade to your home or garden. These trees have a rounded form and yellow summer flowers that turn into papery brown lanterns that cover the tree's fruit. These trees are susceptible to winter injury unless selected from a northern seed source (verify this with your local nursery). Boxelder bugs may feed on the fruit of the tree but are not considered a threat to the overall tree health.

Saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangiana*)

Saucer magnolias do best in partial shade although they will sometimes tolerate full sun. Protection from summer wind and heat exposure will be key to keeping a saucer magnolia happy. These trees have a mature height of 20-30 feet with a canopy width of 15-25 feet. The saucer magnolia is sometimes affected by magnolia scale but it is easily treated. The flowers on the saucer magnolia are huge and beautiful. These flowers emerge before the foliage giving the tree a unique appearance. Sometimes late spring freezes can impact the quality and duration of these flowers. Planting these trees in a more protected area can reduce the likelihood of this occurrence.

Western Soapberry (*Sapindus drummondii*)

Western soapberry trees have a mature height of 25-40 feet (sometimes larger) and a canopy width of 25-30 feet. Western soapberry trees prefer full sun and are tolerant of high pH, drought and typically suffer from no major pests. With a rounded habit and translucent yellow-orange fruit and a yellow fall call these trees are enjoyable to view many months of the year. The fruit can become messy when they fall from the tree so plant the tree away from patios, sidewalks and driveways.

Large Deciduous Trees (40 feet or taller)

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo bilboa*)

Ginkgo trees reach a height of 50-60 feet at maturity with an average canopy width of between 25-40 feet. Ginkgo's prefer full sun, tolerate high pH and drought and typically suffer from no major pests. These trees have a pyramidal canopy shape and have a nice yellow fall color. In higher pH soil, some trees may develop iron chlorosis. Name male varieties such as 'Autumn Gold;' 'Princeton Sentry;' and 'Magyar' are preferred as female trees produce messy fruit and an unpleasant odor.

Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioicus*)

Kentucky coffeetree's reach a mature height of 50-60 feet or more with a canopy width of 30-45 feet. Preferring full sun, these trees are known to be tough. They do fine in high pH soils and are extremely drought tolerant once established. They will also tolerate wet soils and typically suffer from no major pests. The fine texture of the foliage and coarse looking branches (particularly visible in the winter) make this tree visually interesting year round. Female trees produce 5-inch-long pods and both male and female trees have a yellow fall color.

London Planetree (*Platanus x acerfolia*)

London planetree's are huge trees, reaching a mature height of 60-80 feet with a canopy width of 50-60 feet. These trees will grow in full sun to partial shade and will tolerate high pH soils and wet soils. They have a fair tolerance for drought once established. One of the most notable features of the London planetree is its peeling, creamy bark. The tree produces brown ball-like fruit and is a good substitute for sycamore (the trees are nearly identical) which are susceptible to anthracnose. With sturdy branches these trees stand up well to snow and ice loads in the wintertime.

Both K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Forest Service have excellent recommended tree lists that include all of these trees and many more. The Shade and Ornamental Trees for Kansas publication and the Preferred Trees for Northeast Kansas publication can be found on our website www.shawnee.ksu.edu under the Lawn and Garden page on the Gardener Resources tab.