

City of Portland Recommended Tree List

Helpful Info:

“**The right tree in the right place**” is a common refrain when it comes to tree planting. It is important to match the desired characteristics of the tree to the site where the tree is intended to grow. Important factors to consider when choosing a tree include mature height and canopy spread, shading/screening characteristics, flower and fruit production, as well as soil, sun, and moisture requirements.

Planting Site Guidelines:

- Planting space must be at least 3.5 ft x 4 ft and allow for any existing sidewalk to meet ADA standards (3 ft width)
- Minimum 10 ft from intersections, utility poles, hydrants, driveways, and traffic signs or signals
- Minimum 4 ft from underground utilities
- Setback (lawn) plantings must be visible to the public. Co-op trees will not be planted in side or back yards.

Tree Size Guidelines:

Shade/ornamental trees: 1.5 in – 2 in caliper (trunk diameter)

Coniferous trees: 4 ft - 6 ft height

Helpful Links:

[International Society of Arboriculture \(ISA\) Tree Selections and Placement Guide](#)

[ISA Guide to Avoiding Tree & Utility Conflicts](#)

[Arbor Day Foundation “The Right Tree in the Right Place”](#)

[Cornell University Recommended Urban Trees](#)

[U.S. National Arboretum Tree Fact Sheets](#)

[USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#)

Co-op Nursery Information:

[Skillins Greenhouses](#) – Falmouth – 207-781-3860

[O’Donal’s Nursery](#) – Gorham – 207-839-4262

Trees included in this list prove hardy to the local climate, display favorable characteristics, and are generally available in the nursery trade. The list is grouped into categories based on size and appropriate planting site.

Notation Guide:

ST	Street Tree: Planted along the edge of a street and in esplanades between the sidewalk and street. These are often “shade trees” and are chosen based on desired characteristics such as branching height, shape, and hardiness to grow in urban conditions.
LT	Lawn Tree: Set back away from the esplanade or street. These trees can be multi-stemmed, lower branched, and don’t need to be as tolerant of urban conditions. This includes shade, ornamental, conifer, and fruit/nut trees.
*	Especially recommended and generally readily available

Small Trees (15 ft – 25 ft): Those labeled “ST” can be planted under wires

Hedge Maple (*Acer campestre*) **ST / LT**

Grows slowly to a height of 25 ft according to reference materials, however, we have several trees that are approaching 15 ft tall after 10 years.

Three-flowered Maple* (*Acer triflorum*) **ST / LT**

A unique small specimen tree with exfoliating bark and trifoliate leaves that turn yellowish-red in fall. See example at Longfellow Arboretum in Payson Park. Expensive due to slow grow rate.

Shadbush* (*Amelanchier, tree form*) **ST / LT**

Native tree with white or pink flowers in the spring. Prefers moist areas with light shade. Better suited for setback lawn planting and not dry compacted spaces like esplanades. ‘Robin Hill’ is single-stem variety with pink flowers. Good alternative to Callery Pear.

Hawthorn* (*Crataegus*) **ST / LT**

Flowers in June and is noted for its red berries in the winter. Our favorite variety, ‘crus-galli’, has glossy foliage and no thorns. ‘Winter King’ is better for setback lawn planting.

Flowering Crabapple (*Malus*) **ST / LT**

Many varieties with different shape, flower, foliage, and fruit. Varieties with larger fruit are not recommended as street trees.

For lawn planting: ‘Adirondack’, ‘Spring Snow’ (fruitless), ‘Snowdrift’, ‘Donald Wyman’, and ‘Sargent’

For street/narrow planting: ‘Pink Spire’ and ‘Sentinel’

Cherry* (*Prunus*) **ST / LT**

‘Accolade’ & ‘Pink Flair’ varieties produce clouds of pink flowers in early spring and can be planted as street or lawn trees. Upright forms should be used for narrow areas. ‘Amur chokecherry’ has pink/white flowers and interesting bark, and is only suitable for setback lawn planting.

Tree Lilac (*Syringa reticulata*) **ST / LT**

Tree form lilac with white flowers. Requires ample, non-compacted growing space. (Note: this tree is starting to be overplanted and we have some concerns about invasive tendencies).

Paperbark Maple (*Acer griseum*) **LT Only**

A beautiful small specimen tree with exfoliating bark and good fall color. Hard to find, may want to use a smaller size. Grows best in sheltered areas. See example at Longfellow Arboretum in Payson Park.

Korean Maple (*Acer sieboldianum*) **LT Only**

Small ornamental maple with good fall color, trees are often multi-stem & low branched. See examples in Longfellow Square.

Dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) **LT Only**

Kousa and the new Rutgers Hybrids, *C. kousa* x *C. florida*, are recommended specimen trees for lawn areas, white or pink flowers.

White Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) **LT Only**

Beautiful small tree/shrub with white flowers in June. Available only in multi-stem shrub form.

Magnolias (*Magnolia*) **LT Only**

Check with your co-op nursery for availability. Single stem types are more rare than multi-stem plants.

American Hophornbeam* (*Ostrya virginiana*) **LT Only**

Native understory tree that tolerates shade. Interesting bark.

Sourwood* (*Oxydendrum arboretum*) **LT Only**

Excellent small specimen tree with late summer bloom. Scarce, available in small sizes.

Stewartia (*Stewartia pseudocamellia* and *koreana*) **LT Only**

Flowers in July and has beautiful exfoliating bark. Longfellow Arboretum in Payson Park has a beautiful specimen planted in 1976.

Medium Trees (25 ft – 45 ft):

River Birch* (*Betula nigra*) **LT Only**

Fast growing tree with creamy white to brownish bark. Less insect & disease problems than Paper Birch. See grove of River Birch at the Longfellow Arboretum. Available in single & multi-stem. Yellow Birch are also a great option though hard to find.

Hornbeam, American or European* (*Carpinus caroliniana* and *betulus*) **ST / LT**

A nice small to medium sized, compact tree. The bark and leaves are similar to beech trees. Upright forms are useful for screening or hedges. Best planted in non-compacted lawn & esplanade areas. Avoid planting in tree wells.

Katsura* (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) **LT Only**

This is a unique tree with heart shaped leaves that open as reddish purple, turn green, with yellow-orange Fall color. This interesting tree can be seen at the Longfellow Arboretum in Payson Park.

American Yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*) **ST / LT**

Compound leaves and white flowers blossoming bi-yearly in June. Locations Deering Oaks Park, State Street at Park Avenue on the left. Street planting only with ample room.

Turkish Filbert (*Corylus colurna*) **ST / LT**

Hardy with interesting bark. Should grow to 30'. We have been planting Filbert's for over 10 years with good results.

Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) **ST / LT**

Tough street tree able to grow in difficult sites. Small compound leaves cast a filtered shade. Branching habit can allow for planting closer to utility lines than most medium or large trees. 'Skyline' and 'Halka' are recommended varieties.

Tupelo* (*Nyssa sylvatica*) **ST / LT**

Native, rare shade tree that can tolerate damp sites and is slow growing. Fall foliage is bright red. Maine's largest is near O'Donal's Nurseries. Ferry Beach State Park in Saco has a beautiful stand of Tupelo as well. Not suitable for tree wells.

Korean Mountainash (*Sorbus alnifolia*) **ST / LT**

This is a beautiful tree which has a different appearance than the common European Mountainash. The Korean Mountainash has beech-like foliage and bark, white flowers in June, and pinkish-red berries in fall and winter.

Large Trees (45+ ft): should not be planted close to utility lines

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) ST / LT

Native maple with red leaves in the fall. Tolerates wet sites. More salt tolerant than sugar maples, so they are preferred for tree well and esplanade planting. We really like the upright shape cultivars.

'Armstrong' - upright cultivar can be seen in the Old Port area

'Karpick'* - more open with an upright/oval form

'Bowhall'* - more open with an upright/oval form

'Redpointe' - oval to round shape

'Red Sunset' - oval to round shape

Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) LT Only

Native maple with yellow-orange fall foliage. Upright cultivars are available for narrow spaces. Not salt tolerant so avoid planting in tree wells and esplanades. 'Green Mountain' and 'Majesty' are recommended varieties.

Catalpa / Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa*) LT Only

White flowers bloom in June and seedpods develop in the Fall. Interesting Winter form.

Beech, American or European (*Fagus grandifolia* and *sylvatica*) LT Only

Many leaf shapes with color ranging from green to purple. Standard beeches are best planted in lawn areas or behind sidewalks because they need plenty of room to grow. Interesting cultivars include s. *riversii* with purple leaves, and s. *asplenifolia* with fern-like leaves.

Ginkgo* (*Ginkgo biloba*) ST / LT

Unique with fan-shaped leaves and an interesting history. Slow growing after transplanting, but grow well in difficult sites. Cultivars: 'Autumn Gold'* has broad, conical form with good fall color; 'Magyar' is an upright form. Plant non-fruiting.

Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) ST / LT

Tulip shaped leaves with an interesting flower blooming at the top of the tree. Large, fast growing tree that needs room. Maine's largest tulip tree is on Munjoy Hill. Upright cultivar available.

Cucumber Magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*) LT Only

An interesting, large shade tree that does not have the showy spring flowers of other Magnolias. See a beautiful specimen at Brackett & Walker St.

Oak (*Quercus*) ST / LT

There are many varieties of native oak including the Red Oak, Pin Oak, Chestnut Oak, White Oak, and Swamp White Oak*. The Swamp White Oak has beautiful glossy foliage, exfoliating bark and transplants well. Consider upright varieties for small, narrow spaces. Only plant as street trees with ample space.

Elm, American or Chinese (*Ulmus americana* and *parvifolia*) ST / LT

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) has greatly impacted the population. New DED-resistant varieties have shown promise; 'Patriot', 'Princeton', 'Pioneer', and 'Lacebark'. Limited availability. Different sizes and shapes. Fast growing.

Zelkova (*Zelkova*) ST / LT

Was promoted as an American Elm replacement. Vase-shaped but smaller than elms. Difficult branching angles can cause some problems later on if not pruned correctly. Many beautiful specimens exist in the West End near Danforth Street.

Conifers: planted as setback Lawn Trees only

Please note, many evergreens can quickly outgrow a small space. Review growth rates and mature sizes. Nurseries now offer many compact selections.

Pine (*Pinus*) LT Only

Swiss Stone Pine* (*P. cembra*), small, 15-20', slow growing, with soft blue green needles. See nice specimen at the Shoreway Arboretum in South Portland.

'Vanderwolf's Pyramid' Pine* (*P. flexilis*), upright with soft blue-green needles.

Spruce (*Picea*) LT Only

Serbian Spruce* (narrow upright form), pendulous branching.

White Spruce is a good native option.

Blue Spruce are not recommended due to insect and disease problems.

Fir (*Abies*) LT Only

Moderate growth rate and large mature size. Firs have soft needles. Concolor Fir has blueish needles. Balsam and Fraser Fir are used as Christmas trees.

Deciduous Conifers LT Only

Evergreens that lose needles in fall. Offer the shape and screening of an evergreen while allowing sunlight in winter months. Great for lawn areas, naturalized damp sites, or as specimens. Great fall color and texture.

Dawn Redwood* (*Metasequoia*)

Eastern Larch (*Larix laricina*)

Japanese Larch (*Larix kaempferi*)

Fruit & Nut Trees: planted as setback Lawn Trees only

Maximum size 2" caliper / 6 ft. height / #7 Pot

There are many fruit and nut trees available at our Co-op nurseries. *Malus* 'Liberty' and 'Freedom' are two apple varieties with good pest resistance.