



SELECTING TREES FOR YOUR URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST

Trees and Community Character

Trees say so much about the character of a community. The choices we make in selecting trees for public landscapes and streetscapes will determine the nuances of that character. Appropriate tree choices can also minimize future maintenance needs and increase the likelihood that trees will reach their mature potential. "Tougher" trees should be matched to less hospitable sites, and large-scale, native, and less abundant species should be used to diversify your community's urban forest.

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place!

This is the most important concept to understand whenever you are considering planting trees. Basically, every tree has certain needs and characteristics (mature size, growth habit, light requirements, soil needs, etc.), and every planting site has characteristics (growing space, obstructions, soils, light patterns, topography, etc.). Before planting any tree, you should do your best to make sure the tree is compatible with the site. Remember to consider the size of the tree at maturity. Visit a local arboretum to see a variety of trees at their mature sizes. You should also visit your local nursery personally and hand-pick the best trees for your community.

Get to Know the Nuances of Your Community Forest

A street tree inventory or survey can help you identify what currently exists in your community forest, what species may already be over-planted, and what is lacking. Get to know how street trees grow in your community by observing them in a landscape over different seasons. Make note of attractive mature specimens thriving in town or in a neighboring community, in parks, cemeteries, on golf courses, or in an arboretum. Communities should consider developing their own list of recommended streetscape trees based on the needs and character of the community, the existing environmental conditions, and the capacity for maintenance. There are a host of resources to aid selecting appropriate tree species. Consult some of the publications below. Finally, browse local nursery catalogs to determine availability and visit them early to find the very best tree for your community.

Additional Resources:

- Dirr, Michael. Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses. Stipes Publishing, 2009.
• Dirr, Michael. Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia. Timber Press, 1997.
• Planting Trees in Designed and Built Community Landscapes. http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/uf/plant_trees/planting_trees.htm
• Street Tree Fact Sheets. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. 1993.
• International Society of Arboriculture. www.treesaregood.org.

SOME SUGGESTED STREETSCAPE TREES FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Park Trees: (For areas with ample space away from pedestrian and motorized traffic)

Table with 4 columns listing tree species and their scientific names: Paperbark maple (Acer griseum), Japanese maple (Acer palmatum), Horsechestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum), Shagbark hickory (Carya ovata (n)), Chinese chestnut (Castanea mollissima), American beech (Fagus grandifolia (n)), Carolina silverbell (Halesia tetraptera (syn. H. carolina)), Butternut (Juglans cinerea (n)), Black walnut (Juglans nigra (n)), Dawn redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides), Eastern white pine (Pinus strobus (n)), Japanese black pine (Pinus thunbergii), American sycamore (Platanus occidentalis (n)), White oak (Quercus alba (n)), Bur oak (Quercus macrocarpa (n)), Japanese stewartia (Stewartia pseudocamellia).



Massachusetts Urban & Community Forestry Program

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Large Trees: Consider these only in areas with adequate rooting space and without any overhead wires or other obstructions

Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i> (*,n,w)
Sugar maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i> (s,n)
Red horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus x carnea</i> (s)
River birch	<i>Betula nigra</i> (s,n)
Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i> (*,n)
Katsura	<i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>
Turkish filbert	<i>Corylus colurna</i>
Ginkgo (male only)	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> (*)
Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> <i>var. inermis</i> (*) (thornless, fruitless)
Kentucky coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> (m)
Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> (m)
Tulip tree	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>
Cucumbertree	<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>
Black gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> (n)
London planetree	<i>Plantanus x acerifolia</i> (w)
Sawtooth oak	<i>Quercus acutissima</i>
Scarlet oak	<i>Quercus coccinea</i> (n)
Pin oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i> (n)
Red oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i> (n)
English oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Japanese pagoda tree	<i>Styphnolobium japonicum</i> (*)
Korean mountain ash	<i>Sorbus alnifolia</i>
Bald cypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>
Silver linden	<i>Tilia tomentosa</i>
Little-leaf linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i> (*)
American elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i> (n, m)
Cultivars include 'Homestead', 'Princeton', 'Valley Forge'	

Medium Trees: (Plant near power lines or other obstructions WITH CAUTION)

Amur maackia	<i>Maackia amurensis</i>
American hornbeam	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> (n)
Yellowwood	<i>Cladastris kentuckea</i> (syn. <i>C. lutea</i>)
Goldenraintree	<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>
American hophornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i> (n)

Accolade cherry	<i>Prunus sargentii</i> 'Accolade'
Sargent cherry	<i>Prunus sargentii</i>
Kwanzan cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Kwanzan' (l)
Higan cherry	<i>Prunus subhirtella</i>

Small Trees: (Appropriate for planting near power lines or small spaces)

Hedge maple	<i>Acer campestre</i> (*)
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier</i> sp. (n)
Eastern redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Fringetree	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>
Kousa dogwood	<i>Cornus kousa</i>
Cornelian cherry	<i>Cornus mas</i>
Washington hawthorn	<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i> (*)
Crabapple	<i>Malus</i> sp. (*)
Sweet bay magnolia	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>

You might also consider planting additional fruit and nut species in open areas or park areas.

Invasive Trees (DO NOT PLANT) Illegal to import, propagate, or sell in Massachusetts. (Authorized under General Laws Chapter 128)

Norway maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
Sycamore maple	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Amur corktree	<i>Phellodendron amurense</i>
Black locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>

Trees that have shown invasive tendencies

(Plant with caution. Not recommended for planting where they may spread into natural areas)

Amur maple	<i>Acer ginnala</i> prohibited in CT and VT
Japanese tree lilac	<i>Syringa reticulata</i> * instances of naturalization in riparian areas in MA, NY, WI, and VT or escape from cultivation MN, NH

(Notes: **m**-maintenance issues, **i**-invasive, **s**-requires ample space, **w**-already widely planted, **l**-short longevity, **n**-native to Massachusetts, *****-hardy in stressed sites)

Bureau of Forestry
Urban & Community Forestry Program
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02114
www.mass.gov/dcr/urban-and-community-forestry

In Partnership with:
USDA Forest Service and
the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' &
Foresters' Association

