

Tree Selection

When planting a tree in one's yard, some important considerations are:

- a) Use of the Tree (shade, windbreak, ornamental)
- b) Size of the Area (10 ft x 12 ft., half-acre, acre, etc.)
- c) Size of the Tree (at maturity)
- d) Characteristics of the tree (flowers, fruit, size of leaves, etc.)
- e) Specific Cultural Requirements of the Tree (watering needs, etc.)

Use of the Tree

The tree that you choose will depend on what you need this tree to do. If you want a tree for shade, you can plant most of the listed trees, as all will provide shade eventually. However, Ginkgo trees are slower growing, and you will not have shade for quite a while, like 5 to 10 years, maybe. If you need shade a little sooner, consider a faster growing tree, like a Linden or Horse Chestnut or Hackberry. If selecting for a windbreak, choose trees that get taller, rather than wider, and will provide more shelter from the wind. Many of the listed trees fulfill the Ornamental requirement, either bearing flowers, fruit or colorful leaves, or possessing attractive bark for winter interest.

Size of the Area/Size of the Tree

As the heading indicates, one should choose a tree that will fit the area it is to be planted in. If you have a small front yard, you would not plant a Bur Oak -- not even a small, cute Bur Oak. It will grow into a very large tree, over time, and will dwarf the house & yard, and if planted too close to the house, may cause other problems as well. If you have a small yard but want a taller tree to provide contrast, consider a narrower, columnar tree, such as a Japanese Tree Lilac, Black Locust, or Gambel Oak. If you have a wide mow-strip, tree-bank, etc., and you have no overhead power lines, by all means consider a larger tree. And consider planting a tree that is a little more unique or different for your area of town. Diversity in our Urban Forest is something that we should all strive for.

Characteristics of the Tree

Before you buy & plant a tree, make sure you are aware of any litter that it may produce. Profuse flowers can be messy, and may attract bees (this can be a problem if anyone in the family has dangerous allergies to bee stings). Flowers usually mean fruit in some form. This can mean pods of various sizes, berries, apples of various sizes, nuts, etc. Leaves will usually fall, and most will need to be raked, especially if on lawns. Understand the tree before you plant it.

Specific Cultural Requirements of the Tree

Most cultural requirements of trees fall into water needs, and soil adaptability. We live in a high desert area with highly alkaline soil. The trees on the list have been selected for at least moderate tolerance to alkaline soil, and moderate drought resistance. All of them will need to be watered regularly until established. A few may need more regular water even as they are established. Some may be prone to specific diseases or fungal problems.

The List -- Why These Trees?

The trees on this list were selected for Smithfield from the USU Tree Browser. They were selected for tolerance to Alkaline Soil and Drought, first & foremost, and then with consideration to broadening and diversifying our Urban Forest. This is why you may not see some of the more familiar trees on this list, like Norway Maples, Thornless Honeylocust, Ornamental Pears and Boxelders. Remembering the urban forests of the 1960's, filled with beautiful, stately American Elms -- these urban forests became urban logging camps as the saws whined for weeks on end, felling the elms that had all succumbed to Dutch Elm disease. Diversifying the urban forest is the best defense against a repeat of that scenario. Others trees, like Green Ash, Quaking Aspen and other members of the Poplar family, and birches in general, are notoriously disease and insect prone -- much more so than the average tree, and so they, too have been left off this list. This doesn't mean that you can't plant these trees. We are only asking that, if you are planting a street tree in Smithfield, please choose a tree from the list to plant along the street.