

Tree Selection for the Interior of British Columbia

CropHealth Advising & Research

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Kelowna BC, www.crophealth.com

The following are interesting, underused trees suitable for landscape planting.

Many other trees are available. Consult local nurseries and garden centres for a complete selection.

Common Name	Latin Name	Size (height X width) Hardiness zone	Comments by Michael A. Dirr Manual of Woody Landscape Plants	Additional comments
FOR LARGE AREAS SUCH AS PARKS				
Red Horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	10 to 13m X 7 to 12m Zone 3 to 7	Red spring flowers. More tolerance to drought than <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> .	Leaves can scorch during hot weather. Nuts are not to be eaten.
European Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	13 to 20m X 10 to 13m Zone 4 to 7	Tolerant of a wide range of soils. Tolerates pruning and small spaces.	'Fastigiata' is oval-vase without a leader. Leaf scorch in hot dry weather.
Northern Catalpa	<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	12 to 18m X 6 to 12m Zone 4 to 8	Flowers in May-June. Tolerant of hot, dry weather.	Seeds may germinate freely. Wind damage on small branches.
Yellow-wood	<i>Cladastris kentukea (lutea)</i>	9 to 15m X 12 to 17m Zone 4 to 8	Excellent tree for flowers and foliage. Prune only in summer.	Training required on young trees. Not well tested in this region.
Turkish Filbert	<i>Corylus colurna</i>	13 to 17m X 5 to 11m Zone 4 to 7	Thrives in hot summers. Tolerant of adverse conditions.	Requires irrigation until established. Not readily available from nurseries.
Common Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	15 to 18m X 10 to 13m Zone 4 to 7	There is no finer specimen tree. Does not do well in extreme heat.	Beautiful columnar cultivars are 'Dawyck Gold' or 'Dawyck Purple'.
White Ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	Average: 15m X 20m Zone 5 to 9	Pyramidal-rounded outline. Green leaves, reddish-purple in fall.	Handsome for parks and large areas. Cultivars: 'Autumn Purple' and 'Calypso'
American Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	20 to 25m X 13 to 17m Zone 5 to 9	Scarlet fall colours. Cultivar 'Moraine' is most cold hardy.	Messy, prickly fruit. Cultivar 'Ward' has minimal fruit set.
Tulip Tree	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Average: 26m X 17m Zone 4 to 9	Large and magnificent when fully grown. Tulip-like flowers high in tree.	Unique leaf and persistent fruit. Prone to a number of pests.
American Hophornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	6 to 12m X 5 to 12m Zone 3 to 9	Very graceful small tree with horizontal, drooping branches. Slow growth rate.	Will tolerate dry, clay soil. Deer resistant.
Serbian Spruce	<i>Picea omorika</i>	17 to 20m X 8 to 10m Zone 4 to 7	Grows on limestone and acid peats. Tolerates dry air and semi-shade.	Protect from winter winds (burn). Another option is <i>Picea orientalis</i> .
Jeffrey Pine	<i>Pinus jeffreyii</i>	18 to 30m X 8 to 9m Zone 3 to 6	Blue-green twisted needles. Similar to <i>P. ponderosa</i> in growth habit.	Can endure extremes of climate. Native from Oregon to lower California.
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	16 to 25m X 16 to 25m Zone 3 to 8	A majestic and worthwhile tree. Found on many soils but prefers acidic.	Among the most handsome of oak. Deep red fall colour.

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LARGE TREES FOR LIMITED SOIL SPACE				
Maidenhair Tree	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	16 to 27m X 10 to 13m Zone 3 to 8	Tolerant of air pollution. Slow growing. No pest concerns.	Select male varieties such as cultivars 'Princeton Sentry' or 'Autumn Gold'.
Japanese Pagodatree	<i>Styphnolobium japonicum</i>	17 to 25m X 16 to 25m Zone 4 to 8	Presents itself well with an excellent display of late summer white flowers.	Many cultivars are available, such as 'Princeton Upright' (smaller), 'Fastigiata'.
Japanese Zelkova	<i>Zelkova serrata</i>	17 to 27m X 15 to 27m Zone 5 to 8	Good foliage, interesting growth habit. Very handsome tree.	Resistance to Dutch elm disease. Pruning required to maintain form.
London Plane	<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	23 to 33m X 22 to 27m Zone 4 to 8	Once touted as a "super tree". Overplanted, use should be tempered.	High tolerance to extreme environments. Place carefully as mature tree is large.
Littleleaf Linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	20 to 23m X 10 to 15m Zone 3 to 7	Excellent shade tree for large areas. Pests include aphids.	Tolerates containment pruning. Many cultivars.
NATIVE TREES				
White Fir	<i>Abies concolor</i>	9 to 23m X 5 to 9m Zone 3 to 7	Can survive on dry, thin soil layers. Conical and branched to the base.	More drought tolerant than other fir. Bluish green foliage is striking.
Rocky Mountain Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	10 to 13m X 1 to 5m Zone 3 to 7	Slow growth rate of 6" to 12" per year. Many cultivar choices.	Well adapted to dry conditions. Columnar to somewhat rounded habit.
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	20 to 20m X 8 to 10m Zone 3 to 6	Useful for mass planting. Intolerant of shade.	At maturity is adapted to dry conditions. Bark forms irregular scaly plates.
Poplar species	<i>Populus spp.</i>	12 to 15m X 6 to 9m Zone 1 to 7	Growth rates are phenomenal. Many disease and insect problems.	Good tree for wildlife. <i>P.tremuloides</i> is readily available.
WORTHY BUT HIGH MAINTENANCE				
Katsura Tree	<i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>	13 to 17m X 7 to 17m Zone 4 to 8	Performs better in rich, acidic soils. Can suffer from excessive stress.	Requires irrigation during hot weather. Plant in a site protected from wind.
Eastern Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	6 to 9m X 8 to 9m Zone 4 to 9	Eastern native tree with a touch of class. Adaptable to many soil types.	Low stress tolerance. Not drought tolerant.
Cucumber Tree	<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	15 to 27m X 15 to 27m Zone 3 to 8	Prefers moist, acidic soils. Does not tolerate extremely dry or wet.	High maintenance, but worth it. Many cultivars, showy flowers in spring.
Pin Oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	20 to 23m X 8 to 13m Zone 4 to 8	Distinctive pyramidal growth. Very intolerant of high soil pH (chlorosis)	Chlorosis from pH not easily managed. Can be a disastrous problem to fix.

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FOR SMALL SITES				
Hedge Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	8 to 11m X 8 to 11m Zone 4 or 5 to 8	Tolerant of high pH soils and dry soils. Tolerant of compaction and pruning.	Good selection for overhead utilities. Could be sheared into a hedge.
Paper Bark Maple	<i>Acer griseum</i>	6 to 9m X 3 to 9m Zone 4 or 5 to 8	Performs well in clay soils. Slow growth rate.	Bark of younger tree exfoliates to show cinnamon brown colours.
Tatarian Maple	<i>Acer tataricum</i>	4.5 to 7m X 4.5 to 7m Zone 3 to 8	Handsome small specimen tree. Tolerant of drought.	Many new cultivars are available. Intense red samaras in mid-summer.
Purpleblow or Shantung Maple	<i>Acer truncatum</i>	6 to 8m X 5 to 8m Zone 4 to 8	Tolerant of adverse conditions. No serious pest concerns.	Good fall colour in warm areas. Unique leaf shape.
Kousa Dogwood	<i>Cornus kousa</i>	6 to 9m X 6 to 9m Zone 4 to 8	Rounded appearance with horizontal branching.	Plant as a specimen or in small groupings, such as in a shrub border.
Star Magnolia	<i>Magnolia stellata</i>	5 to 8m X 10 to 15m Zone 4 to 8	Plant in protected areas. Prefers rich organic soils.	Showy flowers appear in early spring. Low maintenance plant.
Persian Ironwood	<i>Parrotia persica</i>	7 to 13m X 5 to 10m Zone 4 to 8	Extreme tolerance to stress. Very pest-free.	"Wow" fall colour: gold, crimson, orange Spring leaves red-purple to dark green.
Japanese Stewartia	<i>Stewartia psuedocamellia</i>	6 to 13m X 6m Zone 5	Basically free from pests and diseases. Worthy tree for the garden.	Best in moist, rich, acidic soils. Flowers are very showy.
Japanese Snowbell	<i>Styrax japonicus</i>	6 to 9m X 6 to 9m Zone 5 to 8	A tree of singular grace and beauty. Leaves are perched like butterflies.	Suited for moist, acidic, drained soils. Full sun to part shade.
Japanese Tree Lilac	<i>Syringa reticulata</i>	7 to 13m X 5 to 8m Zone 3 to 7	Tree form lilac, generally trouble free. Excellent specimen or street tree.	Adaptable to soil pH but prefers acidic. Pruning required to maintain bloom.
USE FOR HEDGES				
Lawson Blue Cypress	<i>Chameacyparis l.glauca</i>	3m X 1m Zone 4 to 5	Handsome specimen; graceful habit. Performs best in atmospheric moisture.	Columnar shape, with steel blue foliage. Prefers well-drained soil. Easy to grow.
Moonglow Juniper	<i>Juniperus s. 'Moonglow'</i>	6m X 2m Zone 3 to 7	Dense, pyramidal, conical selection. Intense bluish grey-green foliage.	Prefers drier, well-drained soil. Deer resistant.
Japanese Yew	<i>Taxus cuspidata</i>	3 to 12m X 3 to 12m Zone 4 to 7	Green, lustrous foliage. Prefers sandy-loam soils, well drained.	Many cultivars available. Tolerant of city pollution.

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FOR DRY AND DIFFICULT SITES				
Cockspur Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus crusgalli</i>	6 to 9m X 6 to 11m Zone 3 to 7	Cultivar 'inermis' is thornless, yet with the desired features of the species.	Showy in spring when in bloom. Prone to many pest problems.
Kentucky Coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	20 to 25m X 13 to 16m Zone 3 to 8	Beautiful fragrant flowers. Female trees drop flowers and fruit.	Tolerant of drought and soil pH. 'Espresso' is a fruitless cultivar.
Scotch Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	9 to 18m X 9 to 12m Zone 2 to 8	Valued for its picturesque character. Unique form and colour.	Beautiful contrast among other pines. Suitable as a single specimen.
Lacebark Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	13 to 20m X 13 to 17m Zone 4 to 9	Excellent, tough and durable. Resistant to elm leaf beetle.	Magnificent exfoliating bark. Not readily available in British Columbia.
FOR ACID SOIL OR SHADED LOCATION				
American Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	6 to 9m X 8 to 9m Zone 3 to 9	Best grown in rich, slightly acidic soil. Will grow in drier sites.	Plant in shaded location. Attractive smooth, grey-blue bark.
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	18 to 23m X 18 to 23m Zone 4 to 8	Prefers sandy-loam, well-drained, and slightly acidic soil.	Will develop chlorosis in high pH soils. Tolerant of city pollution.
TREES TO AVOID				
Norway Maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	13 to 17m X 9 to 17m Zone 3 to 7	Well adapted to soil extremes. Poor fall colour.	Scorching of leaves is common during hot dry weather.
European White Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Average: 17m X 12m Zone 2 to 6	Not drought tolerant. Highly susceptible to borer insects.	Water stress leads to top dieback. Also affected by aphids and leafminers.
Flowering Dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	10m X 10m Zone 5	Does well in well-drained, rich soil. Not tolerant to pollution.	Leaves tend to scorch during dry, hot summers.
Russian Olive	<i>Eleagnus angustifolia</i>	4 to 5m X 4 to 5m Zone 2 to 7	Used for grey foliage. Used anywhere salt is a problem.	Highly invasive. Drought tolerant.
Goldenrain Tree	<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	10 to 13m X 10 to 13m Zone 4 or 5 to 9	Choice specimen tree for limited space. Tolerates soil extremes.	Drops plant parts. May be invasive. Beautiful yellow flowers in mid summer.
Amur Corktree	<i>Phellodendron amurense</i>	10 to 15m X 10 to 15m Zone 3 to 7	Select varieties that do not produce fruit. Examples: 'Macho' or 'His Majesty'.	Invasive in some areas. Roots are fibrous, shallow and spread.
Black Locust	<i>Robinia psuedoacacia</i>	10 to 13m X 7 to 10m Zone 3 to 8 or 9	Adaptable to different soils and climate. Has a place in difficult areas.	Poor branch structure. Fragrant spring flowers.
Siberian Elm	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>	15 to 21m X 15 to 27m Zone 4 to 9	Growth is fast and wood is brittle. Poor ornamental tree, not to be planted.	Produces abundance of seeds and can become a nuisance.

Shrub Selection for the Interior of British Columbia

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FOR SPRING INTEREST				
Saskatoon Berry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	1 to 4m X 1 to 4m Zone 2 to 7	Bluish purple berries juicy and edible. Tolerate harsh climate.	Small white flowers emerge early spring. Foliage is greyish-green.
Chinese Witchhazel	<i>Hamamelis mollis</i>	3 to 5m X 6m Zone 5 to 8	Beautiful show in February to March. Probably most fragrant of the species	Flowers are yellow with red calyx cups. Slow growth rate.
Oregon Grape	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	1 to 2m X 1.5 to 2m Zone 4 to 7	Bright yellow flower, very handsome. Spine tipped, lustrous dark green leaf.	Spreads by rhizomes to form thickets. Plant in a protected area, part shade.
FOR SUMMER INTEREST				
Japanese Barberry	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	1 to 2m X 1.2 to 2m Zone 4 to 8	Stems reddish brown, single 1/2" spine. Use for barriers, hedges or groupings.	Many cultivars with different colours. Drought tolerant.
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris x clandoensis</i>	.6 to .9m X .6 to .9m Zone 5	Late flowering period, July to August. Tolerates acid and lime-based soils.	Blue flowers attract pollinators. Prefers full sun, tolerates some drought.
Sweet Pepperbush	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	1.2 to 2.4m X 1.2 to 1.8m Zone 4 to 9	Excellent summer flower and fragrance. Good for shade and wet areas.	Tolerates clay soils and full shade. Flowers attract butterflies and bees.
Bigleaf Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>	.9 to 1.8m X .9 to 1.8m Zone 5 to 9	An interesting species with many forms. Susceptible to late spring frosts.	Pink flowers turn blue in acidic soil. Plant in a protected and shaded area.
FOR FALL INTEREST				
Smokebush	<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	3 to 4.5m X 5.5 to 7.3m Zone 4 to 8	Prefers well-drained loam, sunny area. Late leafing, end of April to early May.	Spectacular leaf colour in fall. Prune to contain size.
Dwarf Fothergilla	<i>Fothergilla gardenii</i>	.6 to .9m X .6 to .9m Zone 4 to 8	Interesting flowers. Outstanding fall colour. Dense mounded habit.	Honey-scented flowers. Some plants sucker more than others.
Staghorn Sumac	<i>Rhus typhina</i> 'Tiger Eyes'	1.5 to 3m X 1.5 to 3m Zone 4 to 8	"Wow" orange-red foliage in fall. Finely dissected foliage.	Can grow in average, dry soils. Will slowly spread by root suckers.
FOR WINTER INTEREST				
Dwarf Hinoki Cypress	<i>Chameacyparis 'Nana Gracilis'</i>	1.8m X .9 to 1.8m Zone 5 to 8	Has thick dark green foliage. Makes a pyramidal bush; fine form.	Slow growing, compact evergreen. Use as a small accent, specimen shrub.
Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	2.1m to 2.7 to 3m Zone 2 to 7	Excellent for massing in large areas. Great for the winter garden.	Different cultivars are available with varied coloured stems and foliage.
Common Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	.9 to 1.8m X .9 to 1.8m Zone 3 to 7	Fruit and shade tolerance are assets. Use for holding banks, cuts and fills.	White berries that last through winter are considered poisonous.