

Our Favorite “Right” Plants for the Right Spot

Shade Trees For Large Areas

Katsuratree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*). Starts out pyramidal and widens as tree ages. Nice heart-shaped soft green leaves that turn yellow in fall. 40-60 feet tall, 20-30 feet wide. Also comes in weeping form.

Purple-leaf beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Striking upright tree with deep burgundy-purple leaves throughout season. Also has attractive smooth dark-gray bark. 50-60 feet tall, 30 feet wide. Weeping purple-leaf beech is much smaller (15 by 15). Full-sized green-leaf beeches also are nice.

Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). Glossy five-pointed foliage is one of nicest features, especially in fall when leaves turn brilliant red. Go with a fruitless variety such as ‘Rotundiloba’ or ‘Hapidaze’ for less mess. Grows 60-75 feet tall and 40-50 feet wide.

European hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). Majestic upright that looks as good as a specimen as it does in a line as a tall property screen. Ribbed leaves turn yellow in fall. Nice smooth bark, too. 40-60’ tall, 30-40’ wide.

American elm (*Ulmus hybrids*). Thought this once popular street tree was wiped out by Dutch elm disease? New hybrids have been developed that are resistant. Look for varieties such as ‘Allee,’ ‘Valley Forge’ and ‘New Harmony.’ Vase-shaped trees 60-80 feet tall by 30-50 feet wide.

Red oak (*Quercus rubra*). Large, rounded shade tree with leaves that turn bright red in fall. New leaves in spring also start out reddish. Can grow 60-75 feet tall and wide. Fairly fast grower, even in poor soil.

Red maple (*Acer rubrum*). Broad, oval-shaped and fast-growing shade tree that turns bright red in fall. ‘October Glory’ and ‘Red Sunset’ are particularly colorful. 50-60 feet tall, 30-40 feet wide.

www.skh.com

About planting shade trees...

One of the first plants most people think about adding to a new landscape is a big shade tree or two. Maples, oaks and other big trees are perfect for keeping afternoon sun from beating on the house and for shading the patio from the western sun in evening — assuming you’ve got the space to accommodate plants of this size.

Shade trees are important elements in landscapes, but they also can create trouble in the wrong spots. In many cases, big trees also have big roots that can out-compete grass or push up sidewalks if not given adequate space. Big trees also produce lots of falling leaves, so factor that into the decision if you don’t want to deal with raking. Also be careful when planting trees near property lines. Your neighbor may not like branches hanging over his property and can legally cut them back to the property line.

If you’ve got the room, shade trees are good choices on southern and western exposures where they block sunlight and keep your house cooler in summer. When the leaves drop in fall, the sun then gets through to help warm the house in winter.

Big shade trees also make nice backdrop plants for the rear of the yard, they offer privacy when planted along borders, and they are effective when planted in rows along either side of a long, wide driveway.

Besides their imposing form and shade-giving benefits, also pay attention to the bark and leaves. Many shade trees have attractive smooth or peeling bark and/or brilliant fall foliage.

Other shade trees for large areas:

American hornbeam	Pin oak
Blackgum	Sugar maple
Goldenrain	Sycamore
Horsechestnut	Tulip tree
Linden	Yellowwood
London planetree	Yoshino cherry
Norway maple	Zelkova

www.skh.com