



TREES & SHRUBS

Small Deciduous Trees

no. 7.418

by J.R. Feucht, J.E. Klett and C. Wilson ¹

Quick Facts...

Small trees provide colorful flowers, fruit and foliage.

Use small trees as a screen for privacy.

Consider available space and soil adaptability when selecting small trees.

If space allows, several kinds of small trees provide variation in foliage texture, flowers and showy fruit.

Make sure the water requirements of the tree match the conditions at your site.

Selection and Planting

Examine the proposed site before planting trees. Allow adequate width to keep walkways, entryways, driveways or buildings clear of overhanging branches. Many small trees, although short, can spread as much laterally as vertically.

Soil. Prepare soil before planting. Loosen it several feet in all directions from the spot you wish to plant. If the soil is heavy clay and hard to work, add aged manure or compost, and work it into the soil at least 12 inches deep. See fact sheet 7.417, *How to Plant Trees and Shrubs*.

Color and texture. For variety, plant several kinds of trees if space allows. Through careful selection, you can have flowers, colorful and interesting fruits, and varied foliage texture and fall colors.

Water. Match the plant with the moisture conditions of the site. Low-moisture trees planted in an irrigated lawn grow too rank. On the other hand, trees that require moderate to heavy moisture do poorly in areas where little or no supplemental water can be applied.

Recommended Trees

Table 1 includes small trees, some shrub-like, that are useful for privacy screening as well as adding interesting foliage textures and fall colors. Most can be used beneath power lines with little or no need for pruning to maintain clearance. The key to symbols used in the table is given below.

Growth rate:

- f = fast
- m = moderate
- s = slow

Soil moisture:

- L = low-water needs; can withstand drought.
- M = moderate water needs; normal lawn watering.
- H = heavy water needs; more than normal lawn watering.



**Colorado
State**
University
Cooperative
Extension

© Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension. 9/92.

Reviewed 9/98.

www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt

Table 1: Small deciduous trees for privacy and color.

Plant Name	Height (ft)	Spread (ft)	Shape	Growth Rate	Soil Moisture	Remarks
<i>Acer ginnala</i> Amur maple	25	15	Broad, spreading	m	H	Sometimes shrubby; scarlet fall color; avoid alkaline soils.
<i>Acer grandidentatum</i> Wasatch maple	25	15	Broad, spreading	m	L	Survives in very dry sites once established; orange-red fall color.
<i>Alnus tenuifolia</i> Thinleaf alder	15	10	Upright, clump	m	H	Use in moist sites; cone-like clusters remain in winter.
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i> Shadblow serviceberry	25	15	Upright	m	L	Showy, white flowers in spring; crabapple-like, red fruits make good jelly.
<i>Betula occidentalis</i> Rocky Mountain or water birch	20	15	Upright, clump	m	H	Use in moist soils; yellow fall color.
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> Eastern redbud	30	20	Upright, spreading	m	M	Pink flowers along twig before foliage; plant in part shade.
<i>Crataegus ambigua</i> Russian hawthorn	20	15	Upright, spreading	m	L	Finely cut, glossy leaves; white flowers; persistent, red fruit.
<i>Crataegus crus-galli</i> Cockspur hawthorn	20	15	Stiffly upright	m	L	Showy, white flowers; red fruit; glossy foliage; thorny; useful for bird sanctuary.
<i>Crataegus mollis</i> Downy hawthorn	25	20	Broad globe	m	M	Showy, white flowers in spring; red fruit in late summer; bronze fall color.
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i> Washington hawthorn	20	15	Upright, spreading	m	M	White flowers; showy, orange-red fruit; red-orange fall color; prominent thorns.
<i>Crataegus x mordenensis</i> 'Toba' Toba hawthorn	15	15	Rounded	m	M	Fragrant, double, white flowers; red fruit.
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i> Russian-olive	30	25	Broad, spreading	f	L	Silvery foliage; fragrant, yellow flowers; tolerates most soils, dry conditions; not recommended for city landscapes, only for the most difficult sites.
<i>Koeleruteria paniculata</i> Goldenrain tree	25	20	Upright, rounded	f	L	For dry sites; panicles of yellow flowers in summer; Chinese lantern-like pods; may freeze back some years.
<i>Malus</i> spp. Crabapple	Varies	Varies	Varies	m-f	M	Many varieties available.
'Bechtel'	25	20	Rounded			Double, pink flowers, usually no fruit.
'Centurion,' 'Red Baron'	20	10	Upright			Rosy-red flowers; red fruit; street tree.
'Dolgo'	30	25	Spreading			White flowers; fruit good for jelly.
'Radiant'	25	15	Upright			Single, pink-red flowers; red-purple fruit.
'Red Splendor'	25	15	Upright			Single, rose-red flowers; purple fruit.
'Royalty'	15	15	Upright			Dark red flowers; purple foliage.
'Snowdrift'	15	15	Rounded			White flowers; red fruit.
'Spring Snow'	20	15	Upright			Usually fruitless; dense foliage.
<i>Populus tremuloides</i> Quaking aspen	30	15	Upright, columnar	f	M	Best in rich, moist soil; root suckers in groves.
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> 'Newport' Newport plum	25	15	Upright, vase	m-f	M	Pinkish-white flowers followed by maroon-red foliage; avoid wet sites.
<i>Prunus maackii</i> Amur chokecherry	25	20	Upright, vase	m	M	Striking, shiny, orange-red bark; white flowers.
<i>Prunus padus</i> European bird cherry	30	15	Upright, spreading	m	M	Fragrant chains of white flowers in spring; fruit good for jellies.
<i>Prunus triloba</i> <i>multiflex</i> Double-flowering plum	15	10	Upright, clump	m	M	Often shrubby; double, deep pink flowers in spring; moist soils best.
<i>Prunus virginiana</i> 'Shubert' Canadian red cherry	30	20	Upright, clump	f	M	Leaves both red and green on same plant; tends to sucker like aspen.
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> Callery pear						
'Aristocrat'	25	20	Upright, open	m	M	White flowers; red to bronze fall color.
'Bradford'	25	15	Broad, oval	m	M	Subject to freeze injury some years.
'Redspire'	25	10	Narrow, upright	m	M	Tight, conical tree for accent; subject to freeze injury some years.
<i>Quercus gambelii</i> Gambel oak	15	10	Upright, clump	s	L	Forms groves by creeping root stocks; often shrubby; needs acid, well-drained soils.
<i>Rhus typhina</i> Staghorn sumac	20	20	Broad, spreading	f	L	Showy, orange-red fall color; spreads by suckers; cut-leaf form, 'Laciniata,' has fern-like foliage.
<i>Syringa reticulata</i> Japanese tree lilac	20	20	Stiffly upright	m	M	Creamy panicles of flowers in late spring.

¹J.R. Feucht, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension landscape plants specialist and professor (retired); J.E. Klett, Cooperative Extension specialist and professor, horticulture and landscape architecture; and C. Wilson, Cooperative Extension horticulture agent, Denver County.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Milan A. Rewerts, Director of Cooperative Extension, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. No endorsement of products mentioned is intended nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned.