



Fact Sheet #5—Tree Species Diversification

Why plant a variety of trees?

American elms are the most common tree in many of Saskatchewan's towns and cities. While they have proven to be a wonderful urban street tree, these elms are now threatened with devastation from Dutch elm disease (DED). We must therefore plant more trees, including some American elm, in order to maintain our urban forests. The greater the variety of trees we plant the better. A broad mixture of species is not only more interesting, but is also far less susceptible to the impact of disease and insects when they occur.

What tree species should I try?

When selecting trees, hardiness and moisture supply are among the most important considerations. The following trees have been grown successfully in both Zone 2 (central Saskatchewan) and Zone 3 (southern Saskatchewan).

American Basswood (*Tilia americana*)

- Zone 3, 15-18m (50-60 feet)
- Requires good moisture
- Grows best in rich, well drained soil
- Long living, with fragrant yellow flowers in late summer
- 'Golden Cascade' or 'Harvest Gold' are recommended cultivars

Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)

- Zone 2, 9-24m (30-80 feet)
- Drought resistant once established
- Slow growing, long living tree
- Young trees transplant readily

Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)

- Zone 2, 6-18m (50-60 feet)
- Drought resistant and long lived
- Adapts to most soil conditions
- 'Foothills', 'Northern Treasure' and 'Prairie Spire' are recommended.
- Also try 'Fallgold' black ash

Littleleaf Linden (*Tilia cordata*)

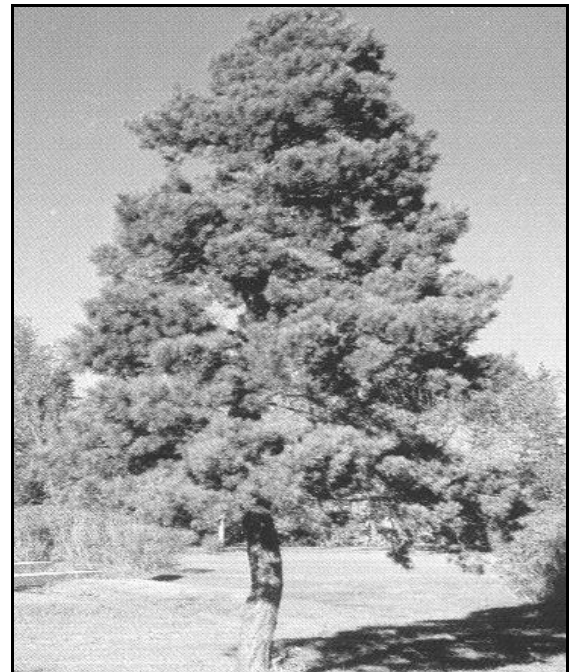
- Zone 3, 10-14m (35-45 feet)
- Broad pyramidal shape
- Needs adequate wind protection and regular watering
- Also try 'Dropmore' or 'Norlin' Linden

Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)

- Zone 3, 6-11m (20-35 feet)
- Drought and salinity tolerant
- Provides striking silver foliage

Showy Mountain Ash (*Sorbus decora*)

- Zone 2, 5-8m (18-25 feet)
- Very hardy, but slow growing
- Showy bright red berries
- Fireblight resistant
- Also try 'European' & 'Russian'



Scots pine is well adapted to dry, sandy sites. Courtesy PFRA Shelterbelt Centre.

Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)

- Zone 3, 15-18m (50-60 feet)
- Rapid growing
- Forms an excellent shade tree
- Leaves light green above, silver-green below
- Fall colour is gold
- Prefers moist conditions
- A clump form is also available

Colorado Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens*)

- Zone 2, 15-20m (50-65 feet)
- A hardy tree, resistant to drought
- New needles are a bluish colour

Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

- Zone 2, 15m (50 feet)
- Grows well in sandy or dry conditions
- Mature bark is an attractive orange-red

Siberian Larch (*Larix siberica*)

- Zone 2, 15-21m (50-70 feet)
- Long living, fast growing
- Needles turn brilliant yellow in fall before being shed

White Spruce (*Picea glauca*)

- Zone 2, 15-20m (50-65 feet)
- Not drought tolerant
- Requires moist well drained soil
- Long living

Are there any unusual tree species worth trying?

There are also a number of less common trees that can be planted to increase the diversity of our urban forests. Sheltered urban areas can offer enough protection that trees rated for even warmer zones will also grow successfully here. Consult a recommended reference book or greenhouse for additional options.

Butternuts (*Juglans cinerea*)

- Zone 3, 10-14m (35-45 feet)
- Grows well in rich, well drained soil
- Rapid growing
- Produces edible white walnuts

Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)

- Zone 2, 10-15m (35-50 feet)
- Drought resistant
- Beautiful fall colour
- Growth form like American elm
- Fruit is attractive to birds

Ohio Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*)

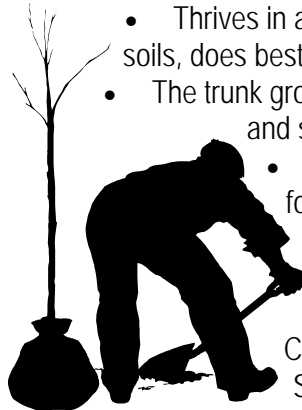
- Zone 2, 9-12m (30-40 feet)
- Slow growing, long living
- Orange-red fall colour
- Large showy flowers in spring

Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*)

- Zone 2, 15-21m (50-70 feet)
- Adapts to most soils where moisture is adequate
- also try 'Alpine' fir

Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*)

- Zone 2, 15-30m (50-100 feet)
 - Thrives in a wide range of soils, does best in full sun
 - The trunk grows straight and slender
 - Typically found in the Rocky Mountains, but also native to the Cypress Hills of Saskatchewan



Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)

- Zone 2, 15-18m (50-60 feet)
- Drought resistant
- Can grow on a wide range of soils

Swiss Stone Pine (*Pinus cembra*)

- Zone 2, 8-11m (25-35 feet)
- Slow growing, needs well drained soil & full sun
- Resistant to winter browning
- Has exceptionally soft needles

What is the best way to plant a tree?

Trees are generally available bare root, in containers, or with burlap wrapped root balls. All forms, especially bare root, are best planted in early spring when still dormant.

- Bare root trees should be planted on small mounds within a planting hole that is dug wide enough to accommodate the length of the roots. If a tap root is present, dig the hole to the depth of the root. The hole should be backfilled with top soil up to the previous soil level once the roots have been distributed over the mound.
- Containerized trees should be removed from their containers and planted in a hole that is also the size of the longest roots in the container, which may need to be unwound from the root mass. If the roots are densely matted the root mass should be sliced vertically with a sharp knife to separate the roots. Backfill with top soil to the original depth of planting.
- Untie and fold back the burlap on trees with wrapped root balls before planting in a hole that is considerably wider, but no deeper than the root ball. The sides of the hole should be wider at the top than the bottom and have sloped walls. Backfill the hole with the top soil to the level that it was originally planted and cover with mulch.
- Water well after planting, remove all tags or labels, and stake if needed. Water well for at least the first year or two.

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