

# Choosing the Right Tree

## in Peterborough, Ontario

**Are you thinking about planting a new tree in your yard? Whether you wish to beautify your property, provide shade or food, purify the air or attract birds, the first step is selecting the right kind of tree to suit your needs and site conditions.**



Like people, trees are particular about the living conditions around them. Some can withstand a fair amount of stress, while others are more delicate and need good

soil, adequate water and lots of sun. City life can be especially difficult for trees due to compacted soils, limited growing space and pollutants such as road salt and smog. Wise tree selection means finding a variety that will thrive in the conditions in your yard while fitting in comfortably with the natural ecology of the region.

Consider trees that are native to our region. They have evolved complex links with other living things, and have adapted to local soils and climate. Some non-native (exotic) trees can be good options for high-stress sites, but be sure to avoid any invasive exotic species, which can damage natural areas and destroy biodiversity. See our fact sheet "Invasive Exotic Plants" for more details.

### Selecting a Planting Site

The more you know about your yard, the easier it is to select a tree that will thrive there. Is your soil heavy clay that gets soggy in spring and then dries rock-hard later in summer? Do you have sandy soil that dries out very quickly? Are you in a new subdivision with only a few inches of topsoil over compacted hardpan? Is your yard mostly sunny or shady? Is it windy or sheltered?

Soil, moisture, sun and exposure are all factors that affect how a tree will grow. In addition, built features such as overhead wires, pavement, underground services, buildings and fences can reduce



the growing space, and lead to future problems. Consider these general guidelines:

- Avoid planting trees under overhead wires. If unavoidable, select species that will not grow tall, or choose shrubs instead of trees.
- Plant as far as possible from roadways, sidewalks and buildings. Allow at least 10 ft. from paved surfaces or buildings.
- Avoid planting in boulevards (the space between roads and sidewalks).
- Consider planting broadleaf trees on the south or west side of buildings to provide cooling summer shade, and warming winter sun.
- Allow at least 20 ft. from existing tree trunks.
- Don't plant near underground services. Call these numbers to request locates for underground services and allow 30 days prior to planting:

Telephone and Natural Gas 1-800-400-2255

Cable 1-800-267-9000

Peterborough Utilities 705-748-9300

City of Peterborough Public Works 705-745-1386

Once you have selected a promising location, use the information on the following pages to find which trees are best suited to your yard.

## Planting and Aftercare

Proper planting and care are critically important to the establishment and long-term health of any tree. See our factsheet "Planting and Caring for Trees" for detailed information.

## Visit Our Tree Nursery

To see many of these recommended trees and for personalized advice on tree selection and care, visit Peterborough's Ecology Park on Ashburnham Drive. Trees, compost and mulches are also available for sale from May through October.

## TREES FOR DIFFICULT SITES

If you wish to plant a tree near a roadway, or if you live in a new subdivision, you will need to choose a variety that can tolerate stressful conditions. Along roadways, trees are exposed to road salt, air pollution, compacted soil and pavement in the rooting zone. Most modern subdivisions have shallow topsoil and very compacted subsoil. Only the toughest trees can survive on these sites.

These trees are most likely to grow on difficult sites. They include hardy native species as well as non-invasive exotics.

### SHORT TREES (3 – 8 m)



Common Name	Serviceberry	Flowering Crabapple
Latin Name	Amelanchier sp	Malus sp.
Height x Width	8 x 3 m	7 x 7 m
Soil	Sand, Loam	Loam, Clay
Moisture	Dry, Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium
Sun	Sun, Part Shade, Shade	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	First tree to bloom in spring	Non-invasive exotic tree

### MEDIUM TREES (9 – 16 m)



Common Name	Ginkgo	Honeylocust	Ironwood	Hackberry
Latin Name	Ginkgo biloba	Gleditsia triacanthos	Ostrya virginiana	Celtis occidentalis
Height x Width	16 x 11 m	16 x 10 m	12 x 8 m	16 x 15 m
Soil	Sand, Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam	Sand, Loam, Clay
Moisture	Dry, Medium	Dry, Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium	Dry, Medium, Wet
Sun	Sun	Sun	Part Shade, Shade	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	Non-invasive exotic tree	Casts light shade	Sensitive to salt	Small berries for birds

### TALL TREES (17+ m)



Common Name	Freeman Maple	Silver Maple	Bur Oak	Basswood 'Redmond'
Latin Name	Acer x freemanii	Acer saccharinum	Quercus macrocarpa	Tilia americana 'Redmond'
Height x Width	17 x 12 m	25 x 16 m	20 x 20 m	17 x 20 m
Soil	Sand, Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay
Moisture	Dry, Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium	Medium, Wet
Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	Hybrid of native red and silver maples	Fast-growing tree	Long-lived tree	Pyramidal shape

Note: Species of ash (*Fraxinus* sp.), notably white and green ash, have been excellent choices for roadside planting in the Peterborough area for many years. They are not included in this list due to uncertain impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer, a devastating exotic insect that feeds on ash trees.

# TREES FOR TREE-FRIENDLY SITES

Backyards are often more tree-friendly, with fewer pollutants and underground services, and deeper and richer soil. These are beautiful, but more sensitive trees that will thrive in the Peterborough region on sites with good growing conditions.

## SHORT TREES (3 – 8 m)



Common Name	Nannyberry	Grey Dogwood	Pagoda Dogwood	Hazelnut	Common Elderberry
Latin Name	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	<i>Corylus americana</i>	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>
Height x Width	6 x 3 m	3 x 2.5 m	5 x 7 m	3 x 3 m	4 x 4 m
Soil	Sand, Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay	Loam	Loam, Clay
Moisture	Dry, Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium, Wet	Medium	Medium	Dry, Medium, Wet
Sun	Sun, Part Shade	Sun, Part Shade	Part Shade, Shade	Sun, Part Shade	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	Edible fruit	White berries	Blue berries	Edible nuts	Edible fruit

## MEDIUM TREES (9 – 16 m)



Common Name	Striped Maple	Ohio Buckeye	Pin Cherry	Blue Beech	White Cedar	Domestic Apple
Latin Name	<i>Acer pennsylvanicum</i>	<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	<i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i>	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	<i>Malus sp.</i>
Height x Width	10 x 7 m	15 x 10 m	12 x 7 m	9 x 8 m	12 x 3 m	9 x 9 m
Soil	Loam	Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam	Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay	Loam
Moisture	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium, Wet	Medium
Sun	Part Shade, Shade	Sun	Shade, Part Shade	Part Shade, Shade	Sun, Part Shade	Sun
Comments	Striped bark		Red berries	Bark like muscles	Sacred to Ojibwa	Edible fruit

## TALL TREES (17+ m)



Common Name	White Birch	Black Walnut	White Spruce	American Beech	Sugar Maple	White Pine
Latin Name	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	<i>Picea glauca</i>	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	<i>Pinus strobus</i>
Height x Width	20 x 10 m	30 x 18 m	25 x 5 m	25 x 20 m	30 x 15 m	30 x 10 m
Soil	Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam	Loam	Loam	Sand, Loam
Moisture	Medium, Wet	Medium	Dry, Medium	Medium	Medium	Dry, Medium
Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun, Pt Shade, Shade	Sun, Pt Shade, Shade	Sun
Comments	White papery bark			Edible nuts	Brilliant fall colour	Tree of Ontario



Common Name	Red Pine	Black Cherry	Red Oak	Eastern Hemlock	Tamarack	Bitternut Hickory
Latin Name	<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	<i>Larix laricina</i>	<i>Carya cordiformis</i>
Height x Width	25 x 10 m	22 x 10 m	25 x 16 m	30 x 8 m	20 x 9 m	25 x 20 m
Soil	Sand, Loam	Sand, Loam	Sand, Loam	Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam, Clay
Moisture	Dry, Medium	Dry, Medium	Dry, Medium	Medium	Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium, Wet
Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun, Pt Shade, Shade	Sun	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	Needs acid soil		Needs acid soil	Shelter from wind	Sheds leaves in fall	Nuts not edible

# TREES FOR A CHANGING WORLD

While it's important to continue working to control climate change, we now face a warming climate and more frequent extremes of weather. With this in mind, a broader range of species may thrive in the Peterborough area, including those native to southwestern Ontario. These are known as Carolinian forest species.

You can improve the chance of success with these trees by selecting planting sites that are protected from bitter winter winds.

## SHORT TREES (3 – 8 m)



Common Name	Redbud	Hoptree
Latin Name	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>
Height x Width	6 x 8 m	6 x 8 m
Soil	Loam	Loam
Moisture	Medium	Medium
Sun	Sun, Part Shade	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	Pink blossoms in spring	

## MEDIUM TREES (9 – 16 m)



Common Name	Pin Oak	Kentucky Coffee Tree	Chinquapin Oak
Latin Name	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>
Height x Width	15 x 12 m	16 x 12 m	15 x 15 m
Soil	Loam, Clay	Sand, Loam	Loam
Moisture	Medium, Wet	Dry, Medium, Wet	Medium
Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun
Comments	Needs acid soil	Pollution tolerant	Needs alkaline soil

## TALL TREES (17+ m)



Common Name	Tulip Tree	American Sycamore	Shagbark Hickory	Swamp White Oak
Latin Name	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	<i>Carya ovata</i>	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>
Height x Width	30 x 15 m	25 x 20 m	20 x 20 m	20 x 20 m
Soil	Loam	Loam	Loam, Clay	Loam, Clay
Moisture	Medium	Medium	Medium	Dry, Medium, Wet
Sun	Sun	Sun, Part Shade	Sun	Sun, Part Shade
Comments	Yellow flowers in spring	Attractive peeling bark	Edible nuts	

Our thanks to:

- City of Peterborough
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