



Trees for Montana: Their size, where they grow

Produced with the assistance of Extension Services, Silver Bow County, and Montana State University.

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How trees, power lines interface:

When planting trees or shrubs it is important to consider not only how well they will grow in your specific Montana climate, but also how their mature height might affect an overhead power line in the future. We have republished this information to give you a good reference when planting a tree or shrub, so you can enjoy your plants for decades.

The table on the next two pages shows plants adaptable to Montana conditions on both the east and west sides of the Continental Divide. The plants that are more adaptable to the west than the east side of the divide are highlighted in green. However, these plants might be adaptable on the east side in small microclimates having milder conditions caused by lower winter temperatures, the presence of wind protection, or other moderating factors. On the tables, you also will see ornamental characteristics, adaptability and remarks for each plant.

The first page of the chart lists trees and shrubs that will have a mature height of under 20 feet while the second page of the chart shows trees and shrubs that will have a mature height

of more than 20 feet. This distinction is significant in selecting a planting location. To reduce any interference with overhead power lines in the future, you should plant trees or shrubs that have a mature height of more than 20 feet, at least 15 to 20 feet from the nearest overhead power line. Columnar trees, which are narrow with a single trunk and have a shorter branch spread, may be placed somewhat closer to the lines. Trees that have a mature height of less than 20 feet can be planted even closer to an overhead power line. You also should avoid planting trees or shrubs next to other pieces of utility infrastructure like natural gas meters or pad-mount transformers. All plants next to our lines or other pieces of equipment have a greater potential for causing a power outage to your home and neighborhood.

Also remember for your own safety and to comply with state and federal law, please call 811 a couple of days before you dig to get underground utilities marked.

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TREES UNDER 20 FT. Green Highlight = Not recommended for eastern Montana

Plant Species	Ornamental Characteristics, Adaptability, Remarks
River Birch (<i>Betula fontinalis</i>)	Red, cherry-like bark. Grows as multiple stem tree. Native. Likes moist conditions but does well with limited water.
Sea Buckthorn (<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>)	Foliage similar to Russian olive. Orange fruit produced on female plants. Tends to sucker into colonies. Drought tolerant.
Mugo Pine (<i>Pinus mugo mughus</i>)	Low growing with compact form if trimmed annually.
Rocky Mountain Junipers (<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> cultivars)	Native semi-upright conifer. Best adapted to dry well-drained soils.
Flowering crab apples (<i>Malus</i> sp.)	Low branched. Good flower and fruit color. Many cultivars susceptible to fireblight.
Apples...Duchess, Anoka, Lodi, Carrol, Good Land, Patterson, Mandan,	Low branched. Valued for flowers and fruit production. Many cultivars susceptible to fireblight.
Hawthorns (<i>Crataegus</i> sp.)	Low branched. Valued for ornamental flowers and fruit. Subject to fireblight.
Pie cherries...North Star, Meteor, Montmorency	Valued for flowers and edible tart cherries. Do best with some protection from wind.
Red Elderberry (<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>)	Valued for white flowers and red fruit. Woody stems weak and need regular pruning.
Glossy Buckthorn (<i>Rhamnus frangula</i>)	Larger than the common kind. Tolerant of poorer soils.
Common Buckthorn (<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>)	Very tolerant of droughty soils, and moderately salty soils.
American Plum (<i>Prunus americana</i>)	Very drought resistant. Valued for edible fruits. Thorny.
Amur Chokecherry (<i>Prunus maackii</i>)	Bronze, birch-like bark. Not valued for flowers or fruit.
European Birdcherry (<i>Prunus padus</i>)	Low branching. Flowers similar to chokecherry. Grows as a single trunk.
Japanese Lilac (<i>Syringa reticulata</i>)	Non-suckering lilac with cream-colored flowers. Interesting bark.
Black Cherry (<i>Prunus serotina</i>)	Fruit similar to chokecherry. Leaves shiny, peach-like. Fruit resistant to grasshoppers.
Mountain Maple (<i>Acer glabrum</i>)	Native to western Montana. Red twigs and yellow fall color.
Tatarian Maple (<i>Acer tataricum</i>)	Similar in habit to Amur maple but with reddish-yellow fall color.
Ginnala or Amur Maple (<i>Acer ginnala</i>)	Low branched tree with vivid red fall color.
Shubert Chokecherry (<i>Prunus virginiana</i> 'Shubert')	Leaves remaining red all season. Flowers and fruit like chokecherry. More easily maintained as a tree than chokecherry.
Buffaloberry (<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>)	Native shrub forming thickets. Thorny but valued for red fruit. Good drought tolerance.
Common Chokecherry (<i>Prunus virginiana</i>)	Native plant forming thickets. Valued for its fruits. Widely adapted.
Most shrubs --- Lilac, Caragana, Red-osier Dogwood, Peking Cotoneaster, Roses, Honeysuckle, Alpine currant, naking Cherry, Sandcherry, Serviceberry, Spirea, Wayfaring Tree, Staghorn, Sumac, Snowberry, others.	Most shrubs short enough to grow under power lines. Many adapted to the entire state; others to only the western half or the Yellowstone valley. Naking cherry, Sandcherry, and Serviceberry have edible fruit. Honeysuckle should be an aphid resistant variety.
Willows --- Drummond, Slender, Gray, Diamond, Pussy, Bebb, Scouler, Dwarf Arctic.	Shrubby plants forming thickets. Hardy but do best where soils are moist. Can be messy to maintain.

TREES OVER 20 FT. Green Highlight = Not recommended for eastern Montana

Plant Species	Ornamental Characteristics, Adaptability, Remarks
Green Ash (<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica lanceolata</i>)	Has some drought and salinity resistance
Burr Oak (<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>)	Dark lustrous leaves and ridged bark
Norway Maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>)	Large leaves provide dense shade. Yellow fall color.
Hackberry (<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>)	Tolerates urban conditions. Subject to damage from nipple gall insect.
Black Walnut (<i>Juglans nigra</i>)	Dark green lustrous leaves.
Quaking Aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>)	Forms large colonies of plants. Yellow fall color.
Boxelder (<i>Acer negundo</i>)	Adapted to poor and droughty soils. Produces winged seeds.
European Mountain-ash (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Valued for orange fruit and reddish fall color. Subject to fireblight and blister mites.
Mongolian Linden (<i>Tilia mongolica</i>)	Hardier than other lindens, but not commonly available.
American Linden (<i>Tilia americana</i>)	Large leaves, grey smooth bark.
European Linden (<i>Tilia cordata</i>)	Leaves smaller than T. americana and heart-shape.
Swedish Poplar (<i>Populus canescens</i>)	Spire-shape. Leaves dark on upper surface; white hairy below. Subject to Cytospora canker. Variety "Tower" tested and known to be hardy.
Boleana Poplar (<i>Populus alba pyramidalis</i>)	Columnar habit. Subject to Cytospora canker. More long-lived than Lombardy P.
Lombardy Poplar (<i>Populus nigra italica</i>)	Columnar habit. Fast growing but subject to Cytospora canker.
White or Silver Poplar (<i>Populus alba</i>)	Very resistant to drought. Very large tree. Produces root suckers in the lawn.
Black Cottonwood (<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>)	Large native tree. Some tolerance to saline soils.
Plains Cottonwood (<i>Populus deltoids</i>)	Large native tree. Subject to Cytospora canker. Objectionable "cotton" from female trees.
Narrow-leaf Cottonwood (<i>Populus angustifolia</i>)	Large native tree with long-narrow leaves. Subject to Cytospora canker.
Golden Willow (<i>Salix alba</i> 'Tristis')	Yellow twigs with narrow leaves. Small branches and twigs brittle and shed on the lawn.
Black Locust (<i>Robinia pseudocacacia</i>)	Medium tree with very hard durable wood. Fairly disease free. Pink pea-like blossoms.
Thornless honeylocust (<i>Gleditsia triacanthos inermis</i>)	Large tree with small fern-like leaves. Produce yellow pea-like leaves. Tolerate city conditions.
Cut-leaf Weeping Birch (<i>Betula pendula gracilis</i>)	Graceful large tree with pendulous branchlets. Pure white bark and yellow fall color. Subject to bronze birch borer.
Paper or Canoe birch (<i>Betula papyrifera</i>)	Smaller than above but with white bark. Not pendulous. Native west of the divide.
Silver Maple (<i>Acer saccharinum</i>)	Very large tree with light green leaves above and silvery below. Shows iron deficiency in saline soils.
Horsechestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanea</i>)	Large, multi-parted leaves that develop reddish fall color. Interesting light colored bark.
American Elm (<i>Ulmus americana</i>)	"Feather duster" shape. Due to susceptibility to Dutch elm disease, better to use hybrids of this and Siberian elm.
Siberian Elm (<i>Ulmus pumila</i>)	Fast growing, drought tolerant. Can be a trashy tree, but resistant to Dutch elm disease.
Austrian Pine (<i>Pinus nigra</i>)	Similar to Ponderosa pine but darker in color. Best in well drained soil conditions.
Scotch Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>)	Interesting multi-colored bark of brown, yellow and orange.
Limber Pine (<i>Pinus flexilis</i>)	Named for limber twigs and small branches.
Ponderosa or Bull Pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>)	Our official state tree. Long needles. Must have well drained soils.
Engelmann Spruce (<i>Picea engelmanni</i>)	Compact, narrow tree native to Montana.
Western Tamarack (<i>Larix occidentalis</i>)	Only deciduous conifer in Montana. Yellow fall needle color.
Alpine Fir (<i>Abies lasiocarpa</i>)	Grows best at high altitude sites.
Colorado Blue Spruce (<i>Picea pungens</i>)	Broad pyramidal shape. Green to blue needle color. Adaptable to moderately droughty soils.
White Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>)	Best know sub-species is Black Hills spruce.
Douglas Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	Not a true fir, but with moderately wide adaptability.