Takoma Park Approved Tree Species List

Note: Only Medium and Large category trees are eligible for planting through the Tree Takoma program.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Nearest State Within Natural Range	Size Category	Mature Canopy Height	Mature Canopy Spread	Soil Moisture			Sun Preference			Notes
						Dry	Moist	Wet	Full-Sun	Part-Sun	Shade	
Acer rubrum	Red Maple	Maryland	Large	40-75	35-60		x	x	x	x		Surface roots can inhibit other plant growth. Not recommended near pavement. Tolerant of a variety of soil and light conditions
Acer saccharinum	Silver Maple	Maryland	Large	50-85	55-80		x	x	x	x		Surface roots can inhibit other plant growth. Not recommended near pavement.
Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple	Maryland	Large	55-85	45-70		x		x	x	x	Less tolerant of urban conditions than other maples
Aesculus flava	Yellow Buckeye	West Virginia	Large	55-75	45-65		x		x	x		Showy flower, large husked seed
Carya cordiformis	Bitternut Hickory	Maryland	Large	55-85	45-75		x	x	x	x		Large husked nut
Carya glabra	Pignut Hickory	Maryland	Large	55-80	35-50	x	x	x	x	x		Large husked nut, edible but challenging to harvest
Carya illinoensis	Pecan	Virginia	Large	75-100	40-75		x		x			Large husked nut, edible
Carya ovata	Shagbark Hickory	Maryland	Large	65-90	50-65		x		x	x		Large husked nut, edible but challenging to harvest
Carya tomentosa	Mockernut Hickory	Maryland	Large	55-70	45-60		x		x	x		Large husked nut, edible but challenging to harvest
Celtis laevigata	Sugarberry	Maryland	Large	60-80	60-80		x	x	x	x		Small edible fruit. Better tolerance of urban growing conditions.
Celtis occidentalis	Hackberry	Maryland	Large	40-75	40-75		x	x	x	x		Better tolerance of urban growing conditions.
Fagus grandifolia	American Beech	Maryland	Large	50-85	45-75		x		x	x		Small husked nut, edible but challenging to harvest
Gleditsia triacanthos	Honey Locust	Maryland	Large	45-75	45-75	x	x	x	x			Better tolerance of urban growing conditions. Recommend planting cultivated varieties without the large thorns
Gymnocladus dioicus	Kentucky Coffee Tree	Maryland	Large	60-80	40-55		x		x			Showy flower, large pod. Better tolerance of urban growing conditions.
Juglans nigra	Black Walnut	Maryland	Large	65-90	65-90		x		x			Large husked nut. Releases a chemical 'juglone' that can reduce the growth of certain plants
Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet Gum	Maryland	Large	60-85	50-70		x	x	x	x		Spikey seed capsule, low-fruiting cultivated varieties available. Better tolerance of urban growing conditions.
Liriodendron tulipifera	Tulip Poplar	Maryland	Large	65-95	35-50		x		x	x		Showy flower
Magnolia acuminata	Cucumber Magnolia	Maryland	Large	55-85	35-55		x		x	x		Showy flower
Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia	Virginia	Large	60-80	30-50		x		x	x		Evergreen, showy flower, showy fruit
Pinus echinata	Shortleaf Pine	Maryland	Large	50-75	35-50	x	x		x			Evergreen
Pinus rigida	Pitch Pine	Maryland	Large	45-70	40-65	x			x			Evergreen
Pinus strobus	Eastern White Pine	Maryland	Large	60-85	30-50	x	x		x	x		Evergreen
Pinus taeda	Loblolly Pine	Maryland	Large	55-90	30-50	x	x	x	x			Evergreen
Platanus occidentalis	American Sycamore	Maryland	Large	75-100	75-100	x	x		x	x	x	Anthracnose can cause deformities and early leaf drop, but most trees tolerate this without much issue
Populus deltoides	Eastern Cottonwood	Maryland	Large	65-95	45-80		x	x	x			"Cotton"-covered seeds
Populus grandidentata	Bigtooth Aspen	Maryland	Large	50-70	20-40							"Cotton"-covered seeds
Prunus serotina	Black Cherry	Maryland	Large	45-70	25-50	x	x		x	x		Small showy flower, small fruit
Quercus alba	White Oak	Maryland	Large	55-85	50-80		x	x	x	x		Acorns
Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak	Maryland	Large	55-75	50-65		x	x	x	x		Acorns. Better suited for urban conditions than other oaks
Quercus coccinea	Scarlet Oak	Maryland	Large	55-75	40-60	x	x		x			Acorns
Quercus falcata	Southern Red Oak	Maryland	Large	65-80	55-65	x	x		x			Acorns
Quercus imbricaria	Shingle Oak	Maryland	Large	45-60	45-60		x		x			Acorns
Quercus lyrata	Overcup Oak	Maryland	Large	40-60	40-60		x	x	x			Acorns
Quercus macrocarpa	Burr Oak	Maryland	Large	65-80	65-80	x	x		x			Acorns
Quercus michauxii	Swamp Chestnut Oak	Maryland	Large	50-70	55-75		x	x	x			Acorns
Quercus montana (prinus)	Chestnut Oak	Maryland	Large	50-75	55-70	x	x		x	x		Acorns
Quercus muehlenbergii	Chinquapin Oak	Maryland	Large	50-65	50-65	x	x		x			Acorns
Quercus nigra	Water Oak	Maryland	Large	50-80	45-70		x	x	x	x	x	Acorns
Quercus palustris	Pin Oak	Maryland	Large	55-75	40-60		x	x	x			Acorns
Quercus phellos	Willow Oak	Maryland	Large	55-80	35-55		x	x	x	x		Acorns. Better suited for urban conditions than other oaks
Quercus rubra	Northern Red Oak	Maryland	Large	55-80	55-75	x	x		x	x		Acorns
Quercus stellata	Post Oak	Maryland	Large	45-55	45-55	x	x		x			Acorns
Quercus texana	Nuttal Oak	Kentucky	Large	45-65	40-60		x	x	x			Oak especially tolerant of clay soils and urban conditions. Acorns
Quercus velutina	Black Oak	Maryland	Large	60-75	60-75	x	x		x			Acorns
Tilia americana	American Linden	Maryland	Large	60-85	40-60		x		x	x	x	Notable nectary for bees and honey production
Tsuga canadensis	Eastern Hemlock	Maryland	Large	50-80	30-40		x			x	x	Evergreen, Wooly adelgid can lead to premature decline
Ulmus americana	American Elm	Maryland	Large	65-85	50-75		x	x	x	x		Dutch elm disease can lead to premature decline, disease resistant varieties available

Scientific Name	Common Name	Nearest State Within Natural Range	Size Category	Mature Canopy Height	Mature Canopy Spread	Soil Moisture			Sun Preference			Notes
						Dry	Moist	Wet	Full-Sun	Part-Sun	Shade	
Acer negundo	Box elder	Maryland	Medium	30-55	30-55		x	x	x	x		Fast growing. Somewhat weedy habit
Aesculus glabra	Ohio Buckeye	Pennsylvania	Medium	20-40	20-40		x		x	x		Showy flower, large husked seed
Betula lenta	Sweet Birch	Maryland	Medium	45-65	35-50	x	x		x	x		
Betula nigra	River Birch	Maryland	Medium	45-70	40-55	x	x	x	x	x		More tolerant of urban conditions than other birches. Attractive bark
Catalpa Speciosa	Northern Catalpa	Maryland	Medium	40-65	20-45		x	x	x	x		Showy flower, long 'bean pods'.
Chamaecyparis thyoides	Atlantic White Cedar	Maryland	Medium	35-60	20-30		x	x	x	x	x	Evergreen
Cladrastis kentukea	American Yellowwood	Virginia	Medium	30-50	40-55		x		x			Showy flower
Diospyros virginiana	Common Persimmon	Maryland	Medium	40-65	25-40	x	x		x	x		Edible fruit
Halesia carolina	Carolina Silverbell	West Virginia	Medium	30-40	20-35		x		x	x		Showy flower. Somewhat tender when young, though reported to tolerate urban conditions when established
Ilex opaca	American Holly	Maryland	Medium	25-45	15-35		x		x	x	x	Evergreen
Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar	Maryland	Medium	40-65	15-30	x	x		x			Evergreen
Maclura pomifera	Osage Orange	Pennsylvania	Medium	30-50	30-50	x	x		x	x		Large spherical fruit and small thorns, fruitless and thornless varieties available
Magnolia macrophylla	Bigleaf Magnolia	Virginia	Medium	30-40	30-40		x		x	x		Showy flower, showy fruit
Morus rubra	Red Mulberry	Maryland	Medium	35-60	35-50		x		x	x		Edible fruit. Not to be confused with the invasive white mulberry.
Nyssa aquatica	Water Tupelo	Virginia	Medium	50-80	25-50		x	x	x	x		Flower for pollinators. Desirable for tupelo honey. Small fruit
Nyssa sylvatica	Black Gum	Maryland	Medium	30-60	20-35	x	x	x	x	x		Flower for pollinators. Desirable for tupelo honey. Small fruit
Ostrya virginiana	Hop Hornbeam	Maryland	Medium	25-45	20-35		x		x	x	x	More tolerant of urban conditions.
Pinus serotina	Pond Pine	Maryland	Medium	40-55	30-50		x	x	x			Evergreen
Pinus virginiana	Virginia Pine	Maryland	Medium	35-60	10-30	x	x		x			Evergreen
Quercus marilandica	Blackjack Oak	Maryland	Medium	30-45	30-45	x	x		x	x		Acorns
Quercus shumardii	Shumard Oak	Maryland	Medium	40-60	35-50	x	x		x			Acorns
Robinia pseudoacacia	Black Locust	Maryland	Medium	30-50	20-35	x	x		x			Showy flower. small thorns. Cracked-cap polypore and locust borer can be problems
Salix nigra	Black Willow	Maryland	Medium	35-55	25-50		x	x	x	x		Very fast growing, aggressive water-seeking roots can be problematic
Sassafras albidum	Sassafras	Maryland	Medium	30-55	30-45	x	x		x	x		Root suckers/thicket-forming
Taxodium ascendens	Pond Cypress	Virginia	Medium	30-70	15-20		x	x	x			Deciduous conifer. More tolerant of urban conditions
Taxodium distichum	Bald Cypress	Maryland	Medium	50-80	20-35		x	x	x	x		Deciduous conifer. More tolerant of urban conditions
Ulmus rubra	Slippery Elm	Maryland	Medium	40-65	30-50	x	x		x	x	x	Dutch elm disease can lead to premature decline, less susceptible than American Elm
Amelanchier arborea	Downy Serviceberry	Maryland	Small	15-25	15-25	x	x		x	x	x	Showy flower, edible fruit
Amelanchier canadensis	Serviceberry	Maryland	Small	20-35	20-30		x	x	x	x	x	Showy flower, edible fruit
Amelanchier laevis	Allegheney Serviceberry	Maryland	Small	15-35	15-35		x		x	x		Showy flower, edible fruit
Asimina triloba	Paw Paw	Maryland	Small	15-30	15-30		x	x	x	x	x	Edible fruit.
Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam	Maryland	Small	20-35	25-40		x			x	x	
Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud	Maryland	Small	20-30	25-35	x	x		x	x	x	Showy flower
Chionanthus virginicus	White Fringetree	Maryland	Small	15-30	15-30	x	x		x	x	x	Showy flower
Cornus alternifolia	Alternate-Leaf Dogwood	Maryland	Small	15-25	20-35		x		x	x	x	Showy flower
Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood	Maryland	Small	20-40	20-40	x	x		x	x		Showy flower. Dogwood anrthacnose fungus can lead to premature decline
Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn	Maryland	Small	20-35	20-35	x	x		x	x		Showy flower, showy fruit, thorns
Crataegus viridis	Green Hawthorn	Maryland	Small	20-35	20-35	x	x	x	x	x	x	Showy flower, showy fruit, thorns
Crategus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn	Maryland	Small	25-30	25-30		x		x			Showy flower, showy fruit, thorns
Hamamelis virginiana	Witch Hazel	Maryland	Small	20-25	20-25		x		x	x		Showy flower. Often multi-stemmed, grows as a very large shrub or small tree
Magnolia virginiana	Sweetbay Magnolia	Maryland	Small	15-35	10-30		x	x	x	x	x	Semi-evergreen, showy flower, showy fruit
Malus coronaria	American Crabapple	Maryland	Small	15-30	20-30		x		x			Showy flower, showy fruit
Oxydendrum arboreum	Sourwood	Maryland	Small	25-40	15-25		x		x	x		Showy flower, showy fruit, not tolerant of poor soil
Prunus americana	American Wild Plum	Maryland	Small	15-30	15-30	x	x		x	x		Showy flower, edible fruit
Prunus pensylvanica	Pin Cherry	Maryland	Small	25-40	20-30	x			x	x		Showy flower, small fruit
Prunus virginiana	Chokecherry	Maryland	Small	20-35	20-25		x		x	x		Showy flower, small fruit
Ptelea trifoliata	Eastern Hoptree	Maryland	Small	15-20	15-20	x	x			x	x	Showy flower
Rhus typhina	Staghorn Sumac	Maryland	Small	15-25	20-30	x	x		x	x		Showy seed head, thicket-forming

Updated: May 2023

Using the Approved Tree Species List

Introduction

This species list serves as a guide for tree species selection in Takoma Park. The City follows a policy of using native and climate adapted species for tree planting when possible. Trees provide many ecological benefits to our community but it is important that the right tree be selected for the growing conditions on the site.

A great indicator of a tree's ecological contribution is its canopy size. A larger canopy will provide more cooling shade to the city and your property, intercept and transpire more stormwater, provide more habitat for wildlife, and sequester more carbon dioxide. And, larger trees tend to be of species that live longer. You can maximize the benefits your tree will provide by selecting a species that will eventually grow to have a healthy-sized canopy.

There are other factors than those that have been included in this list that you may want to consider when selecting a tree. When in doubt, work with University of Maryland extension services, landscape designers, or arborists to select the best tree for your site.

In addition to being a helpful resource for residents, this list provides the approved species for fulfilling a replacement planting required as a condition for receiving a Tree Removal Permit. It is also the list from which all trees planted by the city will be selected from.

The following notes give context to some of the details provided in the species list. Happy tree planting.

Tree Size at Maturity

Tree size at maturity ranges should be assumed to refer to the likely average mature size for a tree grown in full sun or in its typical natural growing conditions. Many factors influence size including proximity to other trees and structures that limit access to light or soil space, access to nutrients and water, and quality of soil. The occasional exceptional specimen may exceed the maximum height and canopy spread values provided. Also, consider that many of these species will take up to a century or longer to achieve the noted dimensions.

Tree Size Category

Trees have been given a size category designation of 'Small', 'Medium', or 'Large'. This is intended to reflect the extent to which a tree of this species might contribute to the urban forest canopy of Takoma Park. Size categories were determined primarily based on an average of the height and spread ranges listed by reputable sources. In some cases, professional experience was used to apply a size category most reflective of a species' typical mature size in our area and in cases where canopy spread was significantly less than height. The size categories also define the options for fulfilling a replacement planting requirement with a comparable species to that of a tree removed with a Tree Removal Permit.

Preferred Growing Conditions

The light and moisture information provided are the conditions in which the species should be able to grow well and thrive. Some species are better able to tolerate conditions outside of their preferred range. If your soil conditions are especially dry or wet or your soil is particularly compacted or exceptionally sandy, it is advisable to conduct additional research and/or consult with a landscape professional to determine the most appropriate species for your site. Note that soils in urban areas are often far more compacted than is ideal for tree growth. Soil remediation can greatly improve the potential for a tree to thrive, fend off insects and disease, and live a long and happy life. Consider conversion from lawn cover to a woody mulched cover to improve your soil over time and to best serve your trees. In extreme cases of compaction more intensive soil remediation may be warranted.

Moisture Preference Key	*Sun Preference Key*
Dry: Soil never remains saturated	Full-Sun: 6+ hours of sun per day
Moist: Soil occasionally remains saturated	Part-Sun: 3-6 hours of sun per day
Wet: Soil frequently saturated	Shade: <3 hours of sun per day

Biodiversity, Emerging Pest and Disease Pressures, and Climate Resilience

With the introduction of exotic pests and diseases that can devastate tree populations and with the changing climate leading to shifts and uncertainty in what species are best able to thrive in a given region, diversity of species is more important than ever to maintaining a durable and resilient urban forest. The goal is to spread our eggs between as many baskets as possible so as to limit the losses due to any one species being impacted by an insect or disease outbreak and to hedge our bets against the uncertainty of which species will do best in future climate conditions. It is important to consider the diversity of tree species around your site when making your selection.

Wildlife Value

Trees can serve wildlife in many ways. Evergreen trees can provide winter shelter to birds. Trees with fruits and nuts can provide nutrition for birds and other animals. Flowers can provide forage for pollinators. Some trees have leaves that are preferred by native insects, which in turn feed animals higher up the food chain.

Due to the complexity inherent in assessing wildlife value, this list does not attempt to determine which trees are better than others at providing that value. The user is encouraged to consider value to native wildlife in their decision-making process and to consult a variety of resources and professional guidance to select an appropriate tree species for these goals.

Native Species

There are many lenses through which to assess what species should be considered native to a given place. There are also many reasons to value native species. Nativeness of a species can be considered through the lens of a selected geographic boundary (East of the Mississippi, Mid-Atlantic Region, Maryland, Montgomery County, Takoma Park) and temporal boundaries or historical milestones (Pre-European settlement, post-glacial retreat). Native plants are valuable to the extent that they are coevolved with the other wildlife of the area and to the extent that they support a diverse and resilient ecology. It is worth keeping in mind that just because a plant is native to somewhere in Maryland, say, at the top of a mountain near Cumberland, it does not necessarily mean that it will thrive in or serve the local ecology of Takoma Park. Also, note that historical records of species distributions prior to European impacts on the landscape are spotty at best. Ultimately, whether or not a species is ecologically appropriate to the natural community is of chief interest.

Plant communities, climate conditions, and landscape conditions are not static over the course of time. Changing climates lead to migration of plant species and communities. The most recent glacial period ended only about 12,000 years ago and the plant communities present in what is now Takoma Park have been changing by the century ever since. These migrations happen slowly and usually with species moving from adjacent regions, not jumping half way around the world.

With all of this in mind, a flexible regional definition of what is native has been applied to this list. The majority of species selected are documented by the U.S. Forest Service to have natural ranges that include the state of Maryland. Some species with ranges a few hundred miles to the south or west of Maryland where similar growing conditions and ecological communities occur and that are well-adapted

to the climate and growing conditions in urbanized Takoma Park have also been included. This approach serves to maximize the biodiversity of our urban forest, to account for how the regional mosaic of species distributions naturally shift over time, and to allow for species from nearby regions that are especially adapted to urban growing conditions, while avoiding concerns of introducing exotic species that carry a heightened risk of becoming invasive and/or damaging local ecological balance.

Data on species natural ranges were drawn from maps published by the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Agriculture.

Criteria for Inclusion on this Species List

- Species that are known to commonly achieve a height at maturity of twenty-five feet or more
- Species with natural ranges that include Maryland and are expected to thrive in Takoma Park. Note that some species that may be native to more mountainous parts of Maryland and would not be expected to thrive in Takoma Park have been omitted
- Selected species with natural ranges in the broader Eastern United States that are ecologically suited to conditions in Takoma Park and are good candidates for use in the urban landscape
- Species without crippling insect or disease problems. All species of ash (*Fraxinus spp.)* and American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) have been left off for this reason
- Note that for the sake of brevity some discretion has been used in omitting certain less common native species unlikely to be found in the nursery trade. Other species that match the conditions above and are considered native to the State of Maryland may be considered for planting in Takoma Park. Contact the Urban Forest Manager if there are any questions.

Resources Referenced

The following resources were referenced in the creation of this list:

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