

**PROPER TREES FOR SMALL PROPERTIES**  
**A Public Service Advisory**  
**From The Churchill Area Environmental Council**  
 Member Municipalities: Chalfant, Churchill, Forest Hills, and Wilkins  
 2300 Wm. Penn Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15235 Spring, 2001

The trees and shrubs recommended here are suitably sized at maturity for ordinary lots. They are hardy in our climatic area (Zone 5-6) and have no troublesome thorns, spines, prickles, messy fruits or invasive growth habits. Trees like oaks, flowering dogwood, and white birch are omitted because of their vulnerability to pests (gypsy moth, fungi, borer insects, etc.) under garden conditions. Trees that produce edible fruit require high maintenance (regular pruning, spraying) and are best left to experienced growers. Most species listed on the back of this sheet are native to our area and possess adaptive hardiness along with disease resistance. It is ecologically sound to plant native trees, thus creating corridors of habitat continuity for birds and other wildlife.

**PLANTING**

- 1) Select a **well-drained site** (water should drain from a one foot deep hole in an hour or less) unless the tree is noted as being tolerant of wet soils. **Spring is best** for planting, but early fall is acceptable if roots have time to establish before a hard frost.
- 2) Plant trees at least 6 – 10 feet back from curbs, driveways and building foundations. Try to **visualize the crown and trunk of the mature tree** for its eventual impact on the landscape.
- 3) Prepare a hole one foot deep (or more) and **at least twice as wide at the top** as the root ball is at the bottom to aid root growth. Cut off the roots of any nearby plants that project into the hole. Remove rocks and mix the soil removed from the hole with compost\* if it contains a lot of clay. If the soil is very poor, discard it and replace it with topsoil mixed with compost.
- 4) Set the tree or shrub in the hole on enough good soil so that the **base of the stem is at the same level it was at the nursery** or in its container. Try not to disturb the soil of container-grown specimens as you unpot them. Untie the top of burlaped plants, spreading the cloth back and down into the hole where it will decay (plastic wraps, on the other hand, must be removed before setting the plant into the hole.) Gently spread the roots away from the trunk so they do not grow in a girdling circle. Bare rooted trees received by mail order should be kept moist and then soaked in water for 3 hours right before planting.
- 5) Hold the plant straight and **add soil to a slightly mounded level** (it will tend to settle.) Shake the stem slightly and press the soil firmly with your hands to eliminate air pockets. Leave a depression all around the trunk base and water thoroughly into this “moat” immediately after planting and once a week for the first growing season unless there is enough natural rainfall. In windy areas young trees should be staked for 18 months until they develop strong roots. Use ties that will not cut into the tender bark (hosiery, cord passed through rubber hose, clothesline etc.)
- 6) **Prune** out any broken, overlapping, or badly angled branches. Cuts should be flush with the trunk. **Mulch** the ground around the base with compost\* or bark to reduce evaporation and with chipped leaves in late fall to prevent winter heaving. Always leave a narrow, unmulched circle near the trunk to deter rodent nesting and gnawing.
- 7) **Fertilize lightly** (use 1/4 the recommended strength in April and June, starting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> growing season). Hollytone, Miracid, or similar formulations are for acid-loving evergreens. Use an all-purpose 5-5-5 or 10-10-10 fertilizer for deciduous species, along with some agricultural or pelletized lime if your soil tends to be acid (pH 6 or lower,) as most soils are in our area. Do not fertilize after July 15<sup>th</sup> to allow growth to slow and “harden” for winter. Over-fertilizing encourages rapid, weak growth and increases susceptibility to weather and pest damage.

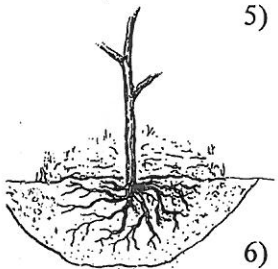
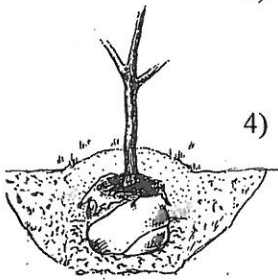
\* A brochure “How to Compost” is available from your municipal office (or send a SASE to C.A.E.C., 2300 Wm. Penn Hwy., 15235). Municipal leaf compost is distributed in our area each summer (call 241-7113 for details) and bagged compost can be purchased at garden supply stores.

**SOURCES OF TREES**

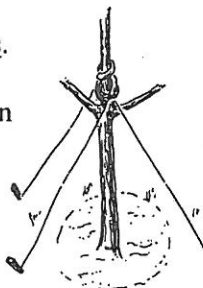
- Beall's Nursery, 9334 Saltzburg Rd, Pittsburgh PA 15239 412-793-6147\*\*  
 Clear Ridge Nursery, 217 Clear Ridge Rd, Union Bridge MD 21791 888-226-9226\*\*  
 Musser Forests, Rt.119 North, Indiana PA 15701 800-643-8319 [www.musserforests.com](http://www.musserforests.com)  
 Plumline Nursery, 4151 Logans Ferry Rd, Murrysville PA 15668 724-327-6775\*\*  
 Roslyn Nursery, 211 Burrs Ln, Dix Hills NY 11746 631-643-9349 (Cat. \$3)  
 Scott's, 734 Beulah Rd, Churchill Boro, Pittsburgh PA 15145 412-823-7142 (limited selection)  
 Stallard Garden Center, 586 Rt. 366, Apollo PA 15613 724-327-4568\*\*  
 Wild Earth Native Plant Nursery, POB 7258, Freehold NJ 07728 732-308-9777 (Cat. \$2)  
 \*\* No Mail Order

**REFERENCES**

- Courtright, G, *Trees & Shrubs for Temperate Climates*, Portland OR, Timber Press, 1988  
 DeWolf, G.P., Jr., *Taylor's Guide to Trees*, NY, Houghton Mifflin, 1988  
 Dirr, M..A., *Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs*, Portland OR, Timber Press, 1997  
 ibid., *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Champaign IL, Stipes Publishing, 1998  
 Rhoads, A.F. & T.A. Block, *The Plants of Pennsylvania*, Phila., Univ. of PA Press, 2000  
 Sargent, C.S., *Manual of the Trees of North America I, II*, NY, Dover Press, 1965



single staking  
for small trees  
(up to 1" diam.)



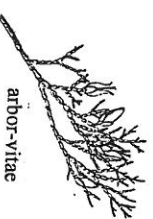
triple staking  
for larger trees  
(over 1" diam.)

## RECOMMENDED TREES (woody plants with single main trunks)

Name	D;E*	Size/ Shape	Light	Soil	Flowers or Cones	Colors and Special Notes
Arbor-vitae, eastern <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	E	40' narrow, pyramidal	S*-pSh	topsoil + compost	seed cones 1/2", woody	lvs. * =appressed scales; flat branchlets
Cedar, eastern red <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	E	15-25' narrow, columnar	S	sandy soil add lime	seed cones 1/3", blue at maturity	blue-green tiny scale lvs. turn russet in fall
+Dogwood, Asian <i>Cornus kousa</i>	D	8-10' spreading	S-pSh	topsoil + compost	May-Jun; fls. * creamy white	good alternate for disease-prone native fl. dogwood
Franklin tree <i>Franklinia alatancha</i>	D	15-20' pyramidal	S-pSh	rich soil + compost	Sep-Oct; fls. waxy white	fall lvs. orange - red; <u>protected location</u> needed
+Golden-rain tree, Asian <i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	D	30' round head	S-pSh	well-drained soil + sand	Jul-Aug; fls. in yellow clusters	cmpd. * lvs., 7-15 leaflets; inflated, papery frts. *
Hawthorn, green <i>Crataegus viridis</i>	D	20-25' round head	S-pSh	topsoil + compost	Apr-May; fls. in white clusters	fall lvs. scarlet; buy <u>thornless cultivars</u>
Hemlock, Carolina <i>Tsuga caroliniana</i>	E	40' pyramidal	pSh - Sh	topsoil + compost/peat	seed cones 3/4", woody	lvs. = 1/2" needles, lustrous, white bands on lower side
Larch, American <i>Larix laricina</i>	D	50' pyramidal or open	pSh	topsoil + compost/peat	seed cones 1/2", winter persistent tufts; yellow in fall	lvs. linear, 1" long, in fall
Magnolia, sweet bay semi-E <i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	E	25' upright	S-pSh	moist soil + compost	May/June; fls. white, fragrant	lvs. leathery; tree often multi-stemmed
+Maple, amur <i>Acer ginnala</i>	D	15-18' upright	S-pSh	well-drained soil+compost	May-Jun; fls. tiny, white	fall lvs. red; frts.(samaras) bright red; from Asia
+Maple, paperbark <i>Acer griseum</i>	D	20-30" upright	S-pSh	topsoil + compost	spring; fls. inconspicuous	lvs. 3-parted, scarlet in fall; red, peeling bark
+Maple, Japanese <i>Acer palmatum</i>	D	10' prune to shape	S-pSh	rich soil + compost	spring; fls. inconspicuous	lvs. green to deep red; finely cut var. * avail.
Maple, striped <i>Acer pensylvanicum</i>	D	35' upright	pSh	topsoil + compost	May-Jun; fls. tiny yellow	fall lvs. yellow; young bark green & white striped
Maple, red <i>Acer rubrum</i>	D	80-100' spreading	S-pSh	moist soil + compost	Mar-Apr; fls. tiny, red	fall lvs. scarlet; young bark smooth, gray
Musclewood (Hornbeam) <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	D	20-35' spreading	pSh	moist, rich soil+compost	early spring fls. inconspicuous	fall lvs. orange-red; low-branched, bushy habit
+Parrot tree, Persian <i>Parrotia persica</i>	D	20-40' spreading	S	topsoil + compost	Mar; fls. red	fall lvs. orange-scarlet; bark flaking, mottled
Pine, pitch <i>Pinus rigida</i>	E	50' irregular	S	sandy topsoil	seed cones have short spines	bark plate-like, scaly; needle lvs. in 3's
Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	D	20-40' spreading	S-pSh	topsoil + compost/lime	May; fls. purple/ pink on stems	fall lvs. yellow; red leaf var. 'Forest Pansy' avail.
Sassafras <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	D	20-30' narrow	pSh - Sh	topsoil + compost	Apr-May; fls. greenish, tiny	fall lvs. golden-yellow, 0-3-lobed; aromatic twigs
Shadbush <i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	D	20-25' upright	S-pSh	topsoil + compost	Apr-May; fls. white	fall lvs. red; small, black frts. for birds
Silverbell <i>Halesia carolina</i>	D	20-30' round-headed	pSh	moist soil + compost	May; fls. white, bell-shaped	fall lvs. yellow; papery frts. have 4 wings
Sourwood <i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	D	30-40' round	S-pSh	topsoil + compost	Aug; small white fls. in panicles	fall lvs. scarlet; fls. attract bees; frts. woody
+Stewartia, Japanese <i>Stewartia pseudo-camellia</i>	D	20-40' spreading	S-pSh	topsoil + compost	Jun; fls. white, large, showy	fall lvs. yellow; attractive peeling bark
Witch hazel <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	D	10-20' spreading	pSh - Sh	moist soil + compost	Oct-Nov; fls. yellow, twisted	fall lvs. delicate yellow; woody frts. persistent

\*D = deciduous; E = evergreen  
S = Sun ; Sh = Shade; pSh = part shade  
lvs. = leaves; fls. = flowers; frts. = fruits  
cmpd. = compound (several parts); var. = variety

+ Not native but of exceptional quality  
++ Asian magnolia species (saucer, star)  
are more showy, but do not bloom well  
in years with late spring frosts.



arbor-vitae



dogwood



golden-rain



hawthorn



magnolia



paper maple



striped maple



musclewood



pine



sassafras



silverbell



Stewartia



red cedar



Franklin



hawthorn



larch



amur maple



Jap. maple



red maple



parrot



redbud



shadbush



sourwood



witch hazel