

Underutilized Trees

Many people have little interest in what types of trees are used in landscape situations, and as far as they are concerned, as long as a tree provides shade and beauty it can be forgotten about. However a closer examination of local landscapes would reveal that there are actually a very limited number of species commonly used. These species include ash, Norway maple, honey locust and flowering pear. The lack of diversity increases the chances of an insect pest or disease decimating many of these trees and also creates monotony in the landscape. Over the last several years it has been found that many different species, other than these, will actually grow well in our unique climate and the use of these underutilized trees should be increased. The following list is not comprehensive but highlights some useful trees that grow well in the area. Please consider them for use in when the need arises.

Washington Hawthorne (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*): This tree has a form that lends itself for use near patios, in park strips and other areas of limited space. It grows to twenty feet high and wide and has decorative spring flowers. It is tolerant of clay soil and develops fruit in the fall. However, the fruit stays on the tree making little to no mess.

Common Hackberry: Common hackberry is a medium sized shade tree that has a fast growth rate. Unlike poplars and willow, hackberries have wood and are disease resistant. The species also grows well in many soil types including alkaline.

Bur Oak: Oaks are more commonly used in other areas of the nation. However this particular tree has been grown in many areas of the state for a number of years with success. It is slower growing, but will eventually reach fifty feet high and wide. Due to this fact, it is best planted in parks or larger yards. Bur oak can be slightly finicky the first year or two it is planted but is worth the effort.

White Fir: This is a native evergreen that is similar in looks to blue spruce but stays much narrower in width. This makes it more suitable for use in today's smaller yards. Its needles are also much softer than blue spruce and vary in color from green to steel-gray. White fir is also very shade tolerant and readily available from local nurseries.

Sargent Cherry: This is one of the best ornamental cherries for use in Utah's colder mountain valleys. It has pink spring flowers and produces little to no fruit. It grows to thirty feet tall and fifteen to thirty feet wide depending on the cultivar. Another added benefit is that its leaves turn shades of orange and red in the fall.

American Linden: Several different lindens (also called basswoods) are available in local nurseries. All are great for landscape use. The American linden, commonly sold as Redmond linden, grows to forty to fifty feet high and wide and is very fragrant in the spring. It is commonly used as a border tree and other formal situations. It also is not a messy tree. However turf can decline under the canopy of all linden trees if the trees are not properly pruned.

Osage Orange: Osage orange is native to the Mid-West and has very strong but flexible wood. It was used by early settlers and Native Americans in the construction of bows. The wild form of the tree has

thorns and large fruit and should be avoided. However forms found in nurseries usually lack thorns and several seedless selections have recently introduced. If you have a situation where other trees will not survive, this is the tree to plant. Just be sure to purchase thornless/seedless varieties. One called white shield is somewhat more common. You may need to order this tree on the internet due to a lack of availability.