



William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening

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Trees: Not Recommended

The following trees have serious drawbacks or can have multiple problems. Consider carefully before deciding to plant. Most are not recommended for growing in the St. Louis area.

Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box elder	Box elder is a fast-growing tree with weak wood that breaks easily when stressed. They attract box elder bugs that may become pests indoors when they look for a place to overwinter.
<i>Acer rubrum</i> <i>Acer saccharinum</i> <i>Acer x freemanii</i>	Red maple Silver maple Freeman maple	All three of these maples are fast growing and have problems with weak wood that breaks easily when stressed. They may also cause buckling under sidewalks or driveways. Silver maple roots may invade and clog damaged sewer lines.
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of heaven	In addition to being short-lived, weak-wooded, messy, and suckering this tree is invasive and should not be planted.
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	Mimosa	This tree is susceptible to a serious wilt disease and the mimosa webworm. It is messy, weak-wooded and invasive in the southeast United States.
<i>Betula pendula</i> and other northern species	White birch	Northern birches, including white birch, are not well-adapted to high heat and humidity and do not thrive in the St. Louis area. Unhealthy trees are especially susceptible to the bronze birch borer, an insect pest that will weaken and kill the tree.
<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>	Paper mulberry	A fast-growing but weak-wooded, suckering tree that is also very susceptible to storm damage.
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i> <i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	Russian olive Autumn olive	These are small trees or large shrubs that are very invasive. They are spread by birds feeding on the fruits.
<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.	Ash	All North American species of ash trees are

		susceptible to damage by the emerald ash borer larva. This insect pest has killed millions of ash trees, and until control methods have been developed, planting any kind of native ash tree is not recommended.
<u>Gleditsia triacanthus</u>	Honeylocust	Honeylocust trees have large potentially painful thorns. There are thornless trees, often listed as <i>G. t.</i> var. <i>inermis</i> (or <i>G. t.</i> forma <i>inermis</i>), but sprouts from the roots of grafted cultivars may produce thorns. These trees are susceptible to several diseases and insect pests. The fruits are large, abundant, and messy.
<u>Koelreuteria paniculata</u>	Golden rain tree	Golden rain tree may attract red-shouldered bugs in large enough quantities to be annoying. In some areas, this tree produces numerous seedlings and is considered invasive.
<u>Lonicera maackii</u> <u>Lonicera morrowi</u> <u>Lonicera tatarica</u>	Honeysuckle	All are very invasive and should never be planted. <i>L. tatarica</i> is more shrub-like but <i>L. maackii</i> and <i>L. morrowi</i> can grow into small trees.
<u>Morus alba</u>	White mulberry	White mulberry is invasive throughout much of the United States. Its fruits are messy and will stain.
<u>Morus rubra</u>	Red mulberry	The tree is weak wooded and the fruit is messy and will stain. Its seedlings are weedy.
<u>Paulownia tomentosa</u>	Empress tree	The tree is weak wooded and seedlings are weedy.
<u>Pinus nigra</u>	Austrian pine	Austrian pine is very susceptible to a severe tip blight disease that weakens and kills affected trees.
<u>Pinus sylvestris</u>	Scotch pine	Scotch pine is not well-adapted to the St. Louis climate and does not do well in high heat and humidity. The resulting unhealthy trees are more susceptible to disease and insect pests.
<u>Populus</u> spp. and hybrids	Poplars Cottonwood Lombardy poplar Aspen	Poplars are susceptible to many diseases and insect pests, especially those poplars that are native to cooler climates, and do not grow well in the heat and humidity of a St Louis summer. Branches are structurally weak and break when stressed by wind or snow. Roots may buckle sidewalks and invade damaged sewer lines. Some species (e.g. cottonwoods) produce seeds with silky white hairs that will clog air conditioners and collect on screens and in gutters.

<u><i>Prunus</i></u> edible cultivars	Edible-fruited cherries, peaches and plums	Fruiting varieties of cherries, peaches and plums are valuable landscape plants but they are susceptible to many insect pests and diseases and may require extra care. They are short-lived and the fruit can be messy if not harvested. Ornamental cultivars may be fruitless or have small fruit that is quickly eaten by birds reducing problems with messy fruit.
<u><i>Pyrus calleryana</i></u> <u>'Bradford'</u>	Bradford pear	Bradford pears have weak limb structure that causes them to lose branches or even topple over when stressed by wind, ice or snow.
<u><i>Quercus palustris</i></u>	Pin oak	Pin oaks require acidic soil to stay healthy and are subject to several diseases and insect pests including galls and oak wilt. The drooping lower branches, which die but remain on the tree are unattractive and limit access to the area under the tree.
<u><i>Robinia psuedoacacia</i></u>	Black locust	Black locust has an aggressive root system that will spread by suckers and may disrupt adjacent areas. It is susceptible to several diseases and insect pests. It has thorns and with its abundant fruit, it may be considered messy. Although native to much of the United States, it may become invasive in grassland areas.
<u><i>Salix</i></u> spp.	White willow Weeping willow	Willows are fast-growing but weak wooded trees very susceptible to damage in storms. Weeping willows drop small branches almost constantly. Many willows are susceptible to late spring frosts and cold events that can result in many dead twigs. Canker diseases can also result in dead twigs and limbs.
<u><i>Sorbus</i></u> spp.	Mountain ash	Mountain ash trees are lovely in flower and fruit but do not perform well in the St. Louis area.
<u><i>Ulmus americana</i></u>	American elm	American elm is subject to the fatal Dutch elm disease. There are resistant cultivars such as 'Valley Forge' and 'Jefferson' but they may still require regular pruning and spraying to maintain good health.
<u><i>Ulmus pumila</i></u>	Siberian elm	With its abundant seed production and weak wood, Siberian elm requires regular clean-up of seedlings and fallen branches. More important, this is an invasive species that should never be planted.