



William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening

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Trees: That can Present a Litter Problem

The following trees drop fruit and/or other debris that can make them undesirable in some locations.

Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horsechestnut	Golfball-sized fruit can be hazardous. Seeds are also toxic and should not be confused with the edible chestnut. Premature leaf drop from leaf blotch disease can be unsightly.
<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	Catalpa	Large numbers for dropping seed pods can present a litter problem.
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Ginkgo	Female ginkgo trees produce a fruit that has a very offensive odor. Male-only cultivars do not produce fruit and are readily available.
<i>Gleditsia triacanthus</i>	Honeylocust	The fruit is large, abundant, and messy. Also, 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.
<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	Kentucky coffeetree	This is a valuable native Missouri tree but some owners may consider its leaves and seed pods a litter problem.
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black walnut	Black walnut trees leaf out late and lose their leaves early; consequently, they are bare much of the year. The nuts can be messy and their husks stain skin, clothing and sidewalks. The roots produce juglone, a chemical which is toxic to many other plants.
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Sweet gum	Sweet gum fruits are abundant, difficult to clean up, fall from the tree over a period of several months and can be hazardous in pedestrian traffic areas. The seeds, however, are an important source of food for songbirds. There is a fruitless cultivar but it is marginally hardy in the St. Louis area.
<i>Maclura pomifera</i>	Osage orange	Large fruit can be dangerous when they fall. The

<u><i>Morus alba</i></u>	White mulberry	latex in the fruit is a skin irritant. White mulberry is invasive throughout much of the United States. Its fruits are messy and will stain.
<u><i>Morus rubra</i></u>	Red mulberry	The fruit is messy and will stain. Its seedlings are weedy.
<u><i>Platanus occidentalis</i></u>	Sycamore	Peeling bark and dropping branches can be a litter problem. Sycamore is also very susceptible to a disfiguring disease called anthracnose disease that can lead to many small dead branches.
<u><i>Quercus</i> spp.</u>	Oaks	Oaks are valuable native Missouri trees but some owners may consider acorns a litter problem. They mature into very large trees and are not suitable for small properties.