



Ignition Resistant Woody Species

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. This guide is intended to provide an overview of fire resistant species suitable for the environmental conditions of the Southern Rockies ecoregions (a - f).
2. Practice planting the right species in the right place. Please check the ecoregion map for more information about soils, altitude, and hydrology.
3. Elevation ranges do not account for urban stressors such as compacted soils, reflected heat, limited rooting volume, or reduced snow insulation.
4. The colored columns depict species suitability for specific site conditions within those ecoregions.

KEY

I = Intolerant
L = Low
M = Moderate

R = Rapid
S = Slow
T = Tolerant
U = Unknown

| Acceptable in Right-of-Way | Drought Tolerant ** | Colorado Native * | Evergreen | Hydrozone | Type | Botanic Name | Common Name/s | Average Mature Height | Average Mature Spread | Shade Tolerance | Salt Tolerance | Growth Rate | Bloom Season | Inflorescence Color | Fruit & Seed | Wildlife Notes | Other Notes |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|---|--|
| | | | | | 3 | Acer ginnalla | Amur Maple | 20' | 20' | M | M | R | Early Spring | white | Winged Samaras | Food and cover for birds | Fragrant flowers, fiery red fall color, red winged seeds, drought. Shrubby form, multistemmed, good for hedging. |
| | | | | | 2 | Acer glabrum | Rocky Mountain Maple | 20' | 15' | M | I | R | Late Spring | green | Winged Samaras | Regular source of cover for wildlife. | Multistemmed, fragrant flowers, orange and red fall foliage. Longlived and shade tolerant. Can be very shrubby. |
| | | | | | 2 | Acer grandidentatum | Bigtooth Maple | 35' | 25' | M | L | U | Spring | white | Double Samaras | Food and cover for birds, and browsed by larger ulgulates. | Shade tolerant, blazing autumn foliage, highly adaptable. |
| | | | | | 4 | Alnus incana | Thin Leaf Alder | 15'-30' | 12'-25' | M | U | U | Spring | Purple-red catkins | Cone | Food and cover for birds and small mammals. | Fixes Nitrogen to soil, flood tolerant, high water use. |
| | | | | | 3 | Betula occidentalis | Western River Birch | 30' | 25' | M | I | M | Mid Spring | Yellow | Insignificant | nectar & pollen for bee, butterfly | Cinnamon brown bark, multistemmed, yellow fall foliage. Good for use in rain garden, or planted along a waterway. Requires a lot of water. |
| | | | | | 2 | Aesculus x carnea | Horsechestnut | 50' | 50' | I | U | R | Spring | Red | Chestnuts | Good for pollinators. | Great shade tree with vibrant blossoms. Seedpods are prickly. Becomes more drought tolerant with age. Young trees require more water to get well established. |
| | | | | | 4 | Betula papyrifera | Paper Birch | 50' | 25' | I | M | M | Mid Spring | Yellow | No | Forage for mule deer, moose; cover for various wildlife, important habitat for birds. | White peeling bark, golden fall foliage. Paper birch is useful for longterm revegetation and soil stabilization. Only recommended for riparian plantings—not for yard use. |
| | | | | | 1 | Celtis occidentalis | Northern Hackberry | 65 | 50' | T | L | R | Mid Spring | Green | Yes, Brown | Special value to honeybees. | Yellow fall foliage, fruit a purplered, slow grower, long lived. |
| | | | | | 2 | Celtis reticulata | Netleaf Hackberry or Western Hackberry | 50' | 50' | T | L | R | Mid Spring | Green | Yes, Brown | Forage and cover for deer, small wildlife and birds. | Yellow fall foliage, fruit a purplered, slow grower, long lived. |

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|--|--|--|---|------|---|--|-----------|-----------|---|---|---|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| | | | 1 | Tree | Crataegus ambigua | Russian Hawthorn | 25' | 20' | M | L | R | Apr – May | White | Red | Forage and cover for birds. | Thorns. Yellow foliage, peeling bark. Occasional thinning required in spring and every summer trim back any suckers that may occur at base. |
| | | | 1 | Tree | Crataegus crusgalli 'Inermis' | Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn | 20' | 20' | I | L | M | Apr – May | White | Red, Purple | Forage and cover. | Fragrant white flowers in spring, dark red fruits, golden foliage. |
| | | | 2 | Tree | Crataegus douglassii | Douglas Hawthorn | 25' | 25' | I | L | U | Apr – May | White | Black | Important forage for grouse, ungulates, and waterfowl. | Showy white flowers, orangered fall foliage. Large thorns. |
| | | | 1 | Tree | Gymnocladus dioica | Kentucky Coffeetree | 65' | 50' | I | M | F | Early Summer | Grfeen, Yellow, White | Brown Pods | More academic research needed on which parts of the seed pods are safe for wildlife forage. The seed pulp is reportedly toxic to cattle. | Excellent shade tree with good tolerance for drought and pollution. Yellow fall color. |
| | | | 1 | Tree | Gymnocladus dioicus | Kentucky Coffeetree (Seedless Varieties) | 65' | 50' | I | M | M | Early Summer | White | Brown Pods | Cover for birds. | Excellent shade tree with good tolerance for drought and pollution. Large, bipinnate leaves, yellow color. Some varieties such as "decaf" are seedless, other have large seed pods. |
| | | | 2 | Tree | Malus 'spring snow' | Spring Snow Crabapple | 20' - 25' | 15' - 20' | U | U | U | Spring | White | Red, Brown, Orange | Forage for all wildlife. | Non-fruiting variety with white flowers. |
| | | | 4 | Tree | Populus x acuminata | Lanceleaf Cottonwood | 60' | 30'-40' | I | U | R | Spring | Green | Catkins | Food, shelter and nesting material for birds and small mammals. | Plant at your own risk. The City of Aspen has a very high concentration of populus trees which has lead to significant pest and pathogen issues. Shallow roots. Requires frequent pruning. New trees are frequently produced from root system (clonal species). |
| | | | 3 | Tree | Populus angustifolia | Narrowleaf Cottonwood | 60' | 30' | I | M | R | Spring | Green | Catkins | Food, shelter and nesting material for birds and small mammals. | Plant at your own risk. The City of Aspen has a very high concentration of populus trees which has lead to significant pest and pathogen issues. Shallow roots. Requires frequent pruning. New trees are frequently produced from root system (clonal species). |
| | | | 3 | Tree | Populus tremuloides | Quaking Aspen | 40' | 50' | I | M | R | Mid Spring | Green or Brown | Catkins | Food, shelter and nesting material for birds and small mammals. Attracts ungulates. | Plant at your own risk. The City of Aspen has a very high concentration of populus trees which has lead to significant pest and pathogen issues. New trees are frequently produced from root system (clonal species). |
| | | | 2 | Tree | Syringa pubescens subsp. patula | Lilac 'Miss Kim' | 10' | 7' | L | U | R | Spring | White, Purple | Brown/Copper | Important for pollinators. | Fine textured tree, fragrant large white flowers, exfoliating bark |
| | | | 1 | Tree | Syringa vulgaris | Common Lilac | 20' | 12' | M | U | R | Late Spring | Purple, White | | | Upright vaseshaped form, heartshaped bluegreen leaves. Check local nurseries for lilac varieties and cultivars that do well at higher altitudes. |

*Regarding "native" plants and trees: This indicates that the species is native to Colorado, but there are many species native to neighboring regions that are suitable for our area--and using adaptive species as climate conditions change improves ecological resiliency. Please keep in mind that an urban site may not always be the best environment for native species that thrive in natural conditions. Examine your landscape and surrounding conditions closely or ask an expert for guidance.

****Regarding "fire resistance":** Fire proof plants and trees do not exist. The flammability rating is related to factors such as moisture, sap, and oil content which may cause a species to more or less likely to catch fire. Please refer to the Colorado State Forest service website (complete URL below) to learn how to protect your home from wildfire.

*****Regarding Drought Tolerant Species:** Drought tolerant species need regular water during the first 2 years of growth in order to establish. As they begin to reach maturity, watering frequency can be reduced.

Resources:

Feature Trees. Colorado Tree Coalition. <https://www.coloradotrees.org/find>

Flowers and Plants. Colorado State University Extension. <https://extension.colostate.edu/topics/flowers-plants/>

Flora of North America, Flora of North America Association. A collaboration project between over 30 American and Canadian Institutions to organize species information. http://www.efloras.org/browse.aspx?flora_id=1

New Mexico State University, Cooperative Extension Service. Fire Wise Plant Materials. <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/FireWisePlantMaterialsNMSU.pdf>

Native Grasses for Use in Colorado Landscapes. Colorado State University Extension Master Gardener. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcgkclefindmkaj/https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/GardenNotes/581.pdf>

Plant Select. Smart plants inspired by the Rocky Mountain Region. A non-profit partnership between Colorado State University, Denver Botanic Gardens, and professional horticulturalists. <https://plantselect.org/>

PLANTS Database (Plant List of Attributes, Names, Taxonomy, and Symbols). USDA. Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service. <https://plants.usda.gov/>

Plant Finder. Missouri Botanical Garden. <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder>

The Tree Guide. Arbor Day Foundation. <https://www.arborday.org/tree-guide>

Trees and Shrubs. Colorado State University Extension. <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/gardening-resources/online-garden-publications/trees-and-shrubs/>

Trees and Shrubs Online. International Dendrology Society. <https://www.treesandshrubsonline.org/>

Utah State University Extension. Range Plants of Utah. <https://extension.usu.edu/rangeplants/shrubs-and-trees>

Utah State University Extension. Maples in the Landscape. <https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/maples-in-the-landscape/>

USDA 2023 Plant Hardiness Map. <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>

U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Urban and Community Forestry, Fire and Aviation Management, and Cooperative Fire programs. <https://fire.sref.info/selector/plant-list>

University Extension Gardener Toolbox. North Carolina State University. <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Water Wise Plants. Colorado Springs Utilities. <https://www.waterwiseplants.org/find-a-plant>

Wildflower Plant Database. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. [Wildflower.org](https://www.wildflower.org)