

SHADE TREES FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS LANDSCAPES



Shade trees are one of our first thoughts in landscape development. We're fortunate in North Texas to have many dozens of highly suitable species. Special care need be given, though, to fitting the tree to the location.

Have an overall plan or objective for planting a tree. Do you need shade, protection from wind, screening, a pedestrian barricade or a colorful accent? Are you using the tree as a frame for your home?

Know your soil and climatic conditions. Many trees such as dogwoods and East Texas pines need acid soils, a rarity in most of North Texas. Other trees such as eucalyptus, citrus and many palms, aren't reliably hardy in winter.

Remember when planning to consider the tree's ultimate height and spread. Two or three well placed accents can do far more for a landscape than a dozen crowded and struggling plants.

It's best to avoid the really fast growing trees, since most are quite prone to pest problems. Included are *willows* (borers, cotton root rot, heat stress), *cottonwood* (cotton root rot), *Arizona ash* (borers), *Chinese elm* (elm leaf beetle), *sycamore* (lace bugs, anthraconose), *mimosas* (mimosa webworm, mimosa wilt) and *fruitless mulberry* (borers, cotton root rot, heat stress).

Better by far are the following landscape plants:

(OVER 40 FEET)

Shumard Red Oak
Live Oak
Water Oak
Willow Oak
Bald Cypress
Cedar Elm
Deodare Cedar
Atlas Cedar

(20 - 40 FEET)

Chinese Pistachio
Golden Raintree
Bradford Pear
Mexican Plum
Crabapple
Japanese Black Pine
Austrian Pine

(UNDER 20 FEET)

Crape Myrtle
Yaupon Holly
Possumhaw Holly
Deciduous Magnolia

Small trees (6-8 feet) may be your better landscape investment, as they recover more quickly from transplant shock than larger specimens. Container-grown stock is quickest to re-establish, followed by balled and burlapped and bare rooted trees.

Water your shade trees slowly and thoroughly during dry spells. Fertilize in February with a complete fertilizer such as 15-5-5 or 15-5-10. Use seven pounds of this fertilizer per inch trunk diameter measured 12 inches off the ground.

Prune established trees during the dormant (winter) season, being careful to leave no stubs to decay. Many trees will need little, if any, pruning each year. None will benefit from the disfiguring topping.