

Best Trees, Shrubs, Vines & Ground Covers For the Golden Triangle

By: Vincent Mannino, County Extension Horticulturist

1. Best Trees

- # 1 - Live Oak: Native to Southeast Texas, Evergreen, Low growing, spreading, Insect & disease resistant, Adapted to heavy clay soils, Strong wooded, Easy to obtain
- #2 - Red Oak: Native to Southeast Texas, Tall, upright growth habit, Beautiful fall color, Deciduous, Strong wooded
- #3 - Bur Oak: Deciduous, Tall, upright growth habit, Large, robust leaves, Large acorn with a heavy cap, Deep rooted, Strong wooded
- #4 - Southern Magnolia, Long-lived, slow growing, Large white, fragrant blooms, Adapted to a variety of soils, Attractive seed pods
- # 5 - River Birch: Rapid growth rate, Graceful branches, Exfoliating bark, Tall growth habit, Yellow fall color, Prefers poorly-drained soils
- #6 - Ornamental Pear: 'Bradford' & 'Aristocrat' varieties, Beautiful white blooms in spring, Glossy green foliage, Yellow to red fall color, Medium to fast growth rate, Inexpensive to purchase
- # 7 - Chinese Pistache: Deciduous, Similar growth habit as pecan, Deep red fall color, Very pest resistant, Adapted to Southeast Texas soils
- # 8 - Fruitless Sweetgum: No fruit, Star-shaped leaves, Yellow and/or red fall color, Easy culture, Upright and neat, Well adapted to Southeast Texas
- # 9 - Bald Cypress: Deciduous cone bearer, Upright growth habit, Beautiful foliage in the spring, Beautiful foliage in the fall, Turfgrass will grow beneath, Strong wooded
- # 10 - Sycamore: Fast growth rate, Attractive trunks and limbs, Easy culture

2. Best Shrubs

- # 1 - Deciduous Holly (Possumhaw Holly): To 16 feet in height, Attractive red or orange berries, Easy culture, Native, Very adaptable to our soils, Sun or part shade
- #2 - Vitex or Chase Tree: Moderate to fast growth habit, Blue, pink or white flowers, Resemble lilacs, Totally pest resistant, Wide variety of soils, Responds well to pruning, Religious significance
- #3 - Nandina or Heavenly Bamboos: Trailing to 6 feet in height, Clusters of white blooms, Leading to cluster of red berries, Slow to moderate growth rate, Relatively pest free
- #4 - Southern Wax Myrtle: Native & adapted to our heavy, Tolerates poorly drained soils, Comes in dwarf & standard forms, Evergreen foliage with piney scent, Well adapted to pruning, Sun or shade adapted, Berries for wildlife
- #5 - Crape Myrtle: Easy culture, Many forms & colors available, Pruned as a specimen tree or shrub, Yellow, red or orange fall color, Moderate to fast growth rate, Adapted to a wide variety of soils
- #6 - Evergreen Hollies: Includes Yaupon, Chinese Horned Holly, Burford, Cassine, Needlepoint Holly and others; Some in dwarf or standard forms; Good evergreen specimens; Slow to moderate growth rates; Long lived; Female have red berries
- # 7 - Oklahoma or Texas Redbud: Shiny thick foliage, Rich pink or white blooms, Yellow or golden-orange fall color, Moderate to fast growth rate
- #8 - Hydrangea: 4-6 feet in height & width, Deciduous, Medium to fast growth rate, Shade loving, Prefers moist, acid soils, Large cluster of blue or pink blooms
- #9 - French Mulberry: 4-6 Feet in height & width, Deciduous, Fast growth rate, Bright purple, pink or white fruit, Native, easy culture, Sun or shade, Attracts birds
- #10 - Altheas &/or Hardy Hibiscus: Up to 14 feet height & 5 feet in width, Deciduous, Moderate to fast growth, Many colors available, Single or double blooms, Sun or semi-shade

3. Best Vines and Ground Covers

- # 1 - Asian Jasmine: Glossy foliage, Easy to grow, Wide variety of soils, Sun or shade tolerant, Relatively pest resistant, Forms a dense mat, Can be maintained at 4 inches
- #2 - Liriope: Sun or shade, Spike-type flower in white, pink or lavender, Evergreen foliage, Green, black or variegated forms, very available, Very drought resistant
- #3 - Plumbago: Best in sun or semi-shade, Returns after each winter, Light blue, dark blue and white flowered forms available, Easy culture, No known pests, Best Vines & Ground Covers
- #4 - Cast Iron Plants: Rugged shade or semi-sun, To 2 feet tall, Large coarse textured leaves, Green or variegated varieties available, Heat & moisture tolerant
- #5 - Daylilies: Sun or semi-shade, Wide varieties of colors, Dense clumps of evergreen foliage, Easy culture, Fast growth
- #6 - Potato Vine or Air Potato: Beautiful heart-shaped leaves, Comes back in spring, Very fast growing, Produces aerial stems that resemble tubers
- #7 - Cypress Vine: An annual native, Reseed and returns each year, Very fine textured, Small trumpet-shaped flowers, red or white in color, Fast growing, Prefers sun
- #8 - Hyacinth Bean or Lablab: Purple-foliaged bean vine, Pinkish-lavender blooms in summer and fall, Purple seed pods, Very fast growing, Freezes in winter and may return in spring, Best Vines & Ground Covers
- #9 - Coral or Red Honeysuckle, Semi-evergreen, Abundant red trumpet-shaped flowers, Not invasive, Fast growing Texas native, Attracts hummingbirds, Best Vines and Ground Covers
- # 10 - Carolina or Yellow Jessamine: Twining semi-evergreen vine, Yellow trumpet blooms in spring, Climbs to great heights, Masses of blooms, Very fast growing, Native to east Texas

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