

ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

County Extension Agent
Beaumont, Texas

Ornamental plants are the primary tool in developing functional and beautiful home grounds; the knowledge of plants, their demands, and their proper usage is seldom understood by the homeowner.

Every plant in the landscape should satisfy a definite landscape need; otherwise, it becomes an added expense, a space taker, or a liability rather than an asset to the homeowner. To achieve full use of a plant in the landscape, the user must know the plant he chooses - its growth requirements and its abilities to satisfy the need for which it is intended.

The following list of plants are broken down into basic or general usage areas with basic growth demands, plant characteristics and sizes, and values and drawbacks. Common names and scientific names are listed. The scientific name should be used when possible because many plants have various common names. Quite often two plants may have the same common name. This plant listing is by no means inclusive.

Small trees are best used as secondary plantings with larger trees on the homegrounds. There is no perfect tree. All have good qualities and bad.

Small Trees:

1. Mimosa (Albizzia julibrissin) Deciduous 35 feet high and wide

Values:

1. Summer blooms
2. Fast and easy growth
3. Fine texture
4. A good climbing tree for children

Drawbacks

1. Messy with bloom, seed pod, and foliage droppage
2. Old strains susceptible to wilt disease

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. | <u>Redbud (Cercis canadensis)</u> | <u>Deciduous</u> | <u>20 feet high and wide</u> |
| | <u>Values:</u> 1. Rich pink or white blooms in spring before foliage.
2. Yellow fall color
3. Fast growth | <u>Drawbacks</u> | 1. Short lived (15-20 years)
2. Demands loose, organic soil.
3. Susceptible to leaf disease |
| 3. | <u>Dogwood (Cornus florida)</u> | <u>Deciduous</u> | <u>30 feet high and wide</u> |
| | <u>Values:</u> 1. White blooms in early spring before foliage
2. Medium fast rate of growth
3. Interesting branching
4. Deep red fall color and berries
5. Attracts birds | <u>Drawbacks</u> | 1. Short-lived (15-20 years)
2. Demands acid, loamy soils in partial shade and summer moisture |
| 4. | <u>American Holly (Ilex opaca)</u> | <u>Evergreen</u> | <u>30 feet conical form</u> |
| | <u>Values:</u> 1. Conical evergreen
2. Red berries in fall and winter (on female only) | <u>Drawbacks:</u> | 1. Rather slow growth
2. Susceptible to scale, sooty mold, and white-fly
3. Prefers acid, loamy soil--may yellow due to a lack of iron. |
| 5. | <u>Yaupon (Ilex vomitoria)</u> | <u>Evergreen</u> | <u>15-20 feet high--
Narrow and upright</u> |
| | <u>Values:</u> 1. Evergreen--leggy form
2. Red berries in fall and winter (female only)
3. Easy culture | | |
| 6. | <u>Dahoon or Cassine Holly (Ilex cassine)</u> | <u>Evergreen</u> | <u>15-20 feet high</u> |
| | <u>Values:</u> 1. Good evergreen specimen
2. Rich red berries
3. Adaptable | <u>Drawbacks:</u> | 1. Rather slow growth |

7. Golden Rain Deciduous 25 feet high and wide
 (Koeltreuteria paniculata)
- Values: 1. Yellow flowers in late summer and fall
 2. Seed pod in late fall
 3. Fast growth
 4. Yellow fall color
- Drawbacks: 1. Short lived (15-20 years)
 2. May be injured by severe winter cold
 3. Susceptible to minor insects and diseases.
8. Crape Myrtle Deciduous 15-20 feet high-leggy
 (Lagerstroemia indica)
- Values: 1. Summer flowers (red, pink, purple, or white); long period of bloom
 2. Leggy, upright form
 3. Vivid fall color
 4. Easy culture--fast growth
- Drawbacks: 1. Prefers sunny locations only
 2. Susceptible to scale and white-fly
 3. Susceptible to mildew (near east variety mildew resistant)
9. Japanese Magnolias Deciduous 15-25 feet high
 (various varieties)
- Values: 1. Abundant bloom in early spring before foliage
 2. Low branched
 3. Grows in sun or shade
 4. Good in mass plantings or as a single specimen
- Drawbacks: 1. Difficult to transplant
 2. Prefers acid soils which are loamy and well-drained.
 3. Susceptible to scale and mildew
 4. Late cold may injure early blooms.

10. Wax Myrtle (Myrica cerifera) Evergreen 15-20 feet high and Wide
- Values: 1. Neutral green year round
 2. Fast rate of growth
 3. Easy culture-- sun or shade
 4. Will stand moist or wet areas and salt conditions
 5. May be pruned to form leggy trunks
11. Parkinsonia or Jersaleum Thorn (Parkinsonia aculeata) Deciduous 25 feet high and wide
- Values: 1. Fine, graceful texture
 2. Open character
 3. Yellow flowers all summer
 4. Fast growth
- Drawbacks: 1. Very thorny
 2. Difficult to transplant
 3. Prefers sun and dry soil
 4. May be injured by hard freeze
12. Lombardy Poplar (Populus nigra italica) Deciduous 30 feet high-- narrow form
- Values: 1. Fast growth
 2. Narrow, upright form
- Drawbacks: 1. Demands moisture
 2. Short-lived (10 years)
 3. Highly susceptible to borers
 4. Damaging, fiberos root system
 5. Weak wooded
13. Cherry Laural Prunus caroliniana Evergreen 25 feet
- Values: 1. Small, upright evergreen
 2. Fast growth
 3. Fruit attracts birds
 4. Easy culture-- sun or shade

14. Chinese Tallow (Sapium sebiferum) Deciduous 30 feet
- Values: 1. Excellent fall color
 2. Rapid rate of growth
 3. Easy culture
 4. Attractive seed pod in fall
- Drawbacks: 1. Seed pod may be messy
 2. Severe cold may injure
15. Sassafras (Sassafras varifolium) Deciduous 30 feet--
 upright character
- Values: 1. Flowers and interesting branching in early spring
 2. Easy culture-- sun or shade
 3. Excellent fall color
 4. Rapid rate of growth
- Drawbacks: 1. Suckers badly
 2. May be difficult to obtain
16. Japanese Plum or Loquat (Eriobotrya japonica) Evergreen 15-20 feet high
- Values: 1. Small evergreen
 2. Rapid rate of growth
 3. Coarse, large textured foliage
 4. Flowers and fruit
 5. Easy culture-- tend to prefer shade or semi-shade
- Drawbacks: 1. Susceptible to fireblight disease
 2. Does best in poor soil
 3. Prefers shady conditions
17. Chinaberry (Melia azadarack) Deciduous 20 feet high and wide
- Values: 1. Lavender late summer blooms
 2. Oriental character or effect
 3. Colorful yellow fruit in late summer and fall
- Drawbacks: 1. Messy with droppage of fruit and twigs
 2. Poisonous
 3. Short-lived
 4. Susceptible to scale

22. Moraine Honeylocust Deciduous 15-20 feet
 (Gleditsia triacanthos moraine)
- Values: 1. Attractive--fine textured--yellow-green foliage
 2. Attractive yellow fall color
 3. Fast growth
- Drawbacks: 1. Weak wooded
 2. Sometimes susceptible to borers
 3. Demands sun
23. Ornamental Pear or Callery Pear Deciduous 25-30 feet
 (Pyrus callervana)
- Values: 1. Spring pear blooms
 2. Yellow-green foliage
 3. Medium to fast rate of growth
 4. Attractive vasa shape or form
 5. Yellow fall color
- Drawbacks: 1. Droppage of small and abundant fruit
 2. Slightly susceptible to fireblight disease
24. Purple-leaf Plum Deciduous 15-20 feet
 (Prunus blireiana Newport)
- Values: 1. Rich wine leaf color
 2. Attractive and edible fruit
 3. Attractive accent tree
- Drawbacks: 1. Susceptible to fruit tree diseases and insects
25. Deciduous Holly or Possumhaw Deciduous 10-15 feet
 (Ilex decidua)
- Values: 1. Attractive red or orange berries (on female only) in fall and winter when plant is void of foliage
 2. Easy culture, sun or part shade--very adaptable
- Drawbacks: 1. Susceptible to tent-caterpillars and aphids

26. Fringe tree or Grancy-Gray Beard Deciduous 10-15 feet
(Chionanthus virginicus)
- Values: 1. Attractive green foliage
 2. Attractive silver-white panicles
 3. Easy culture, sun or shade
- Drawbacks: 1. May be difficult to obtain
 2. Slow growth
 3. Only the female plant blooms
 4. Prefers acid, loamy soils
- Silver Maple - White Poplar Deciduous 25-30 feet, upright
(Populus alba)
- Values: 1. Fast growth
 2. Silver-gray foliage
- Drawbacks: 1. Suckers and sprouts badly
 2. Susceptible to borers
 3. Damaging fibrous roots
28. Fruitless Mulberry Deciduous 15-20 feet
(Morus alba "fruitless")
- Values: 1. Rapid rate of growth
 2. Attractive foliage
 3. Low branched for climbing
- Drawbacks: 1. Susceptible to leaf diseases
 2. May sucker or send out sprouts
29. Vitex or Chase tree Deciduous 10-15 feet
(Vitex agnus-castus)
- Values: 1. Spikes of blue blooms in summer
 2. Fast growth
 3. Easy culture-- prefers sun

30. River Birch (Betula nigra) Deciduous 30 feet

<u>Values:</u>	1. Rapid growth rate 2. Graceful branches 3. Bark peels off to expose interesting texture and color 4. Yellow fall color 5. Tall, upright form	<u>Drawbacks:</u>	1. Susceptible to leaf insects, aphids and caterpillars
----------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

31. Chinese Parasol tree or Varnish tree (Firmiana simplex) Deciduous 25-30 feet

<u>Values:</u>	1. Unusual upright form with no branching except at top--parasol shape 2. Rapid rate of growth 3. Large coarse textured foliage 4. Yellow fall color 5. Interesting seed pod in fall	<u>Drawbacks:</u>	1. Large leaves may be messy
----------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------	------------------------------