



Accountability - Dedication
Honesty - Integrity - Respect

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 21, 2026
TO: Tara Vasicek, City Administrator
FROM: Sydney Mroczek, Parks and Recreation Director
RE: Approved, Prohibited, and Restricted Tree Species Lists

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of the proposed Approved, Prohibited, and Restricted Tree Species Lists. The proposed lists establish standards for future tree planting and support the implementation of the City's updated tree ordinance and Urban Forestry Management Plan.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed tree species lists identify tree species appropriate for planting on public property while limiting or prohibiting species that are invasive, susceptible to pests and diseases, structurally weak, or otherwise unsuitable for long-term urban forest management. The lists promote species diversity, improve the resilience of the City's tree canopy, and provide staff with consistent guidance when selecting trees for future planting projects.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

SIGNATURE:

Concurrence: Betsy Eckhardt, Director of General Services

By: Betsy Eckhardt

Signature: Sydney Mroczek, Park and Recreation Director

By: Sydney Mroczek

Approved: Tara Vasicek, City Administrator

By: Tara Vasicek

City of Columbus Recommended Public Tree List

Purpose

This tree list guides tree selection on City-owned property and within the public right-of-way. It promotes species diversity, long-term canopy health, and resilience to insects, diseases, and environmental stressors. The list shall be adopted by resolution and reviewed periodically.

Species not listed may be approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation (or designee) if appropriate for the planting site and consistent with the City's urban forestry goals.

Acceptable Trees

- Large Canopy Trees: Bur Oak, Swamp White Oak, Red Oak, Chinkapin Oak, Kentucky Coffeetree, American Linden, Sycamore, Bald Cypress, Tuliptree (where appropriate)
- Medium Trees: Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Freeman Maple cultivars, Ginkgo (male cultivars only), London Planetree
- Ornamental Trees: Serviceberry, Eastern Redbud, American Hornbeam, Japanese Tree Lilac, Disease-resistant Crabapple cultivars
- Approved Elm Cultivars: Accolade®, American, Patriot, Princeton, New Horizon, Triumph™, Valley Forge
- Honeylocust (thornless, seedless cultivars)
- Ponderosa Pine
- Eastern White Pine
- Blue Spruce (limited)
- Norway Maple (phase down over time)
- Silver Maple (limited use only)
- Red Pine

Restricted Trees

- Hackberry
- Juniper
- Ponderosa Pine
- Silver Maple
- Eastern Cottonwood

Prohibited Trees

- All Ash species
- Tree of Heaven
- Russian Olive
- All Poplar species
- Boxelder
- All Willow species

- Mulberry
- Siberian Elm
- Chinese Elm
- Non-approved Elm species
- Bradford/Callery Pear and related cultivars
- Horse Chestnut
- Buckeye
- Pecan
- Most Cypress species (except Bald Cypress where appropriate)

Recommended Ordinance Language – Species Diversity

The City shall strive to maintain species diversity so that no single species comprises more than 10% of the public tree population and no single genus comprises more than 20% of the public tree population. Tree selection shall be made with these diversity goals in mind.

Implementation Notes

- Evergreen trees should not be prohibited outright. Appropriate evergreen species may be approved where suitable.
- Species lists should be reviewed periodically and updated by resolution to reflect new research, pests, diseases, and urban forestry best practices.