

TREES TO PLANT

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Ash trees that have or will soon be removed need replacement and what to plant is becoming a common question. Trees are a long term investment. It is worth selecting a quality tree that is less likely to turn into a problem.

In a nutshell, a quality tree is considered to be one that has strong wood, few pest or other problems, and is not overplanted in an area.

I'm often asked for a list of fast growing trees to provide quick shade. However, fast growing trees tend to be lower quality due to soft or brittle wood. It is fast growth that can lead to weaker wood.

Slower growing trees tend to be better quality and typically provide benefits for more years with fewer problems. And people are often surprised at how fast supposedly slow growing trees grow when sited, planted, and cared for correctly.

While I will list a few trees to consider, there are too many good to great trees to list them all. Two resources to use are the Nebraska Forest Service at <https://nfs.unl.edu> and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum at <https://plantnebraska.org>. Both have lists of trees for Nebraska.

After reviewing these, ask a local nursery or Nebraska Extension office about trees of interest. A reputable nursery person has experience with growing trees in the area and can share which ones have been successful and which trees tend to have issues or fail to grow well.

Over the years, I've compiled a list of trees for our area. They are designated as good to great trees, okay to good trees, okay trees, and trees to avoid planting. Feel free to e-mail me for this list at kfeehan2@unl.edu.

When selecting trees, look for trees hardy to at least zone 5. Consider tree height and crown width. Select a tree that will fit your planting site. When possible, select a taller shade tree over a small ornamental tree for the greatest amount of shade.

There is a growing trend to plant shorter trees, especially after wind storms. If this trend continues, our communities will lose valuable shade canopy at a time when climate change makes it important to maintain this canopy.

Here are some shade trees to consider planting in our area. Check these trees out further. Make sure they have characteristics you like and you can live with any characteristics you might not like.

Oaks are great. Of the oaks, consider Chinkapin, English, red or bur oak. Maples are always popular. Quality maples include Norway maple and heat tolerant sugar maples. Other maples to consider are State Street or Miyabei maple, black maple and paperbark maple. They are untested here but should do well.

Of the elms, try one of the new Dutch Elm resistant hybrid elms. These include Jefferson, Prairie Expedition, and Princeton. Lacebark elm is a nice tree. Other hybrid elms to plant are Frontier, Triumph, Cathedral and Accolade.

Other trees I like are Ginkgo, Kentucky coffeetree, silver linden, Ohio buckeye, pecan, horse chestnut and shagbark hickory.

Trees to AVOID include ash, pin oak, silver maple, seed producing cottonwood, poplars, austrees, white birch and royal Pawlonia.