

Shade: Small Trees

Scientific Name	Common Name	Height	Comments
<i>Alnus rugosa</i>	speckled alder	15-25'	Prefers wet soil high in organic matter; native.
<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Juneberry	15-25'	Fall color is yellow to dull red; fruit berry-like, reddish purple; tolerates partial shade; native.
<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Allegheny serviceberry	15-25'	Fall color is orange red; fruit purple black, sweet and edible; native.
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	blue beech	20-30'	Fall color is orange-scarlet; bark is fluted giving a muscle appearance; native; tolerates heavy shade.
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern redbud	20-30'	Tolerates partial shade; plants should be from Univ. of MN seed source to be reliably hardy in MN.
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	pagoda dogwood	15-25'	Fall color reddish purple; native; horizontal branches.
<i>Hamamelis vernalis</i>	vernal witchhazel	6-10'	Yellow flowers in March; fruit a capsule; handles filtered shade.
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	common witchhazel	10-20'	Yellow flowers bloom in October/ November; fruit a capsule; handles filtered shade.
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	sour gum	30-50'	Fall color bright scarlet; moist, well-drained acid soil; plant only trees from northern sources.
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	ironwood	25-40'	Fall color yellow; understory tree, does well in heavy shade; native.
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	chokecherry	20-30'	Fruits globose dark purple, edible; understory tree in the woods; native.
<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>	hoptree, wafer-ash	15-20'	Fall color yellow-green; native; understory tree in moist woodlands.
<i>Staphylea trifoliata</i>	American bladdernut	5-15'	Bladder-like fruit; tolerates very heavy shade; native.
<i>Taxus cuspidata</i>	Japanese yew	5-15'	Dark green foliage; upright and spreading forms; deer favorite; toxic to cows and horses.
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Eastern hemlock	40-70'	Leaves are soft, short needles; no fall color; evergreen; grows slowly; likes cool, moist conditions; native.
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	nannyberry	12-18'	Fall color purplish red; fruits bluish-black; filtered shade; native.

Whether in the city, suburbs, or rural areas, small trees are often needed for shady locations. Some of these trees may grow larger in full sun; the height listed is for full sun conditions.

Compiled by Shirley Mah Kooyman, Hennepin County Master Gardener. Shirley has been teaching as a Master Gardener for 22 years. She also coordinates Adult Education classes at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and is a botanist. She compiled this list based on her personal knowledge and teaching experience.



Redbud is an early spring flowering native tree that tolerates shade.



Eastern hemlock is a native evergreen that will grow in shady conditions. It is much fuller and dense when grown in full sun.