



# Bear Creek Press

*'Barking Up The Right Tree'*

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## Tree Hugging or *Learning to Embrace the Tree*

Trees are having a rough time of it lately. If it is not a drought or trunk-toppling ice or windstorm, boring insects or leaf chowers, we humans cause no end of harm by cutting, pushing, clearing or scraping the soil away from our good friends. It is time to lend support to the mighty tree (and some smaller ones, too). It is time to do our part to help the shade-providing, wind breaking, oxygen-producing, smile-inducing, flower-providing tree. Here are a few noteworthy natives and other species that are particularly garden worthy.

## Flowering Gems That Grow Under 20' Tall

**Arnold's Promise Witch Hazel** This native ornamental tree is noteworthy for its unusual flowering time. Witch Hazel's desire to be first in line has resulted in a display of blooms in February at a time when most trees are not anxious to bloom. The fragrant flowers are as unique as the flower time. The small crinkled petals form along the branches and are bright yellow. The observant tree watcher will encounter these in the Ozarks where they usually grow between 6' to 10' tall and wide.

**Dogwood** Although many new dogwood variations are now being introduced, our favorites are still the standard white and pink forms. The native dogwood introduces spring each year by lighting up the woods, cloaked in white and announcing the purity of flowering trees. Its cultivated sister, the pink dogwood, is equally handsome, carrying large umbrella flowers that precede the foliage. Stunning foliage in the fall make this small tree one of the favorites for a confined spot in the garden.

**Kousa Dogwood** This Asian cousin to the native dogwood is an attractive small specimen tree. The large white flowers emerge later than the native dogwood after the foliage emerges. Kousa Dogwood, like the standard dogwood, is clothed in stunning foliage in the fall and has a pink flowering sister. This tree will grow to about 20' tall by 20' wide.

**Red Buckeye** The Red Buckeye is another small tree native to the Ozarks. Large fan-shaped, palmate leaves emerge in early spring and provide a dark green backdrop to large clusters of red flowers. This is an understory tree and will grow well under the canopy of taller trees.

**Red Bud** The Redbud is one of the most loved spring flowering trees. Several cousins to the native form are ideal specimens for a small yard. Forest Pansy Redbud has deep maroon colored leaves that emerge after spring flowering. Lavender Twist Redbud is a recently available weeping form. Its trailing branches are gracefully covered with traditional flowers. Avondale Redbud is a non-native form with brighter colored flowers thickly born on all woody parts of the tree.

## The Shade Providers

**Sweet Gum** One of the first trees to color in the fall is the Sweet Gum. The deep red foliage appears early, providing the backbone of the dramatic autumn change. These large, fast developing trees offer plenty of shade in the summer. Two seedless varieties are now popular. *Rotundiloba* Sweet Gum has large round lobed leaves that are similar to the stunning color of the standard Gum. *Cherokee* Sweet Gum has a traditionally shaped pointed leaf but lacks the seed balls common to the species.

**Ginko** One of the oldest trees in the world, fossils of the Ginko leaf have been found in the U.S. It has been reintroduced after becoming extinct in this country. Its unique fan-shape leaf is one of the most widely recognized leaf patterns and is beautiful in full fall color. A long lived, pest-free specimen, the Ginko makes a fine shade tree and can grow up to 50 feet or more in height.

**Willow Oak** The Willow Oak is an overlooked member of one of the most important family of trees. Narrow leaves similar to the willow give this oak its name. A delicate texture is the trademark of this sturdy tree. Willow Oaks are handsome fall trees, displaying reds, oranges and deep yellow leaves late in the fall.

**Maple** The family of Maples is one of the most popular groups of shade trees. Good winter structure and fast growth make them a perfect choice for a roomy site. Most maples are chosen for their fantastic fall display. *October Glory* Maple is a popular specimen that boasts brilliant red-orange foliage. For those that prefer deeper color, *Brandywine* Maple turns a darker burgundy in the fall. Although Maples are traditionally a wide tree, the *Armstrong* Maple has a tall, narrow profile that lends itself to urban settings or tighter spaces. It will grow to under 15' wide at maturity

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## Here's the Dirt on Good Soil- Available Now

The best foundation for any tree or garden is good soil, a substance that disappeared from the Ozarks long before gardeners arrived. We are now offering several soil types to help counter the sorry lack of an important natural resource. All these soils are available in bulk for pick-up at the nursery or delivery to your garden.

**Basic Topsoil** is a sandy loam that is good for planting starter landscapes and native trees. It will hold water but drain well enough to avoid soggy roots.

**Sifted Topsoil** has been screened to remove the lumps common to the basic soil. Sifted topsoil is easier to shovel and rake and is ideal for lawns and other applications where finer soil is desired.

**Compost** This yummy compost is well decomposed, odorless and has a fine consistency. It is a great compost to mix into existing beds or use as a topdressing to improve surface tilth. It is composed of composted wood chips and rice hulls and is produced in Arkansas.

**Garden Mix** A mix of sifted topsoil and compost creates an excellent soil for any gardening project. Well drained and loamy, we mix this soil on site and use it for most of our own plantings. This soil is so good, we occasionally have to add rocks to bring it up to local standards.

## Tree Care Tips

- ♣ Protect young trees from deer browse by fencing or spraying with repellent.
- ♣ Mulch a circle around the trunk to protect bark from damage. Do not pile mulch against bark.
- ♣ Plant new trees in well drained soil, water thoroughly and often. Even a good rain fall is rarely enough to get you off the hook from watering.
- ♣ Trim most trees in winter. Thin suckers, branches in center of tree, and branches that cross and rub against one another. Flowering trees should be pruned after blooms have faded.
- ♣ Avoid staking new trees unless absolutely necessary. It is best to let the trunk sway in the wind.

**March Hours: Tuesday ~ Saturday, 9 to 5. Open 7 days a week in April.**

### *Tree Coupon*

Plant a Tree for Arbor Day

**20% Off All Trees in Stock**

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### **March is Garden Club Month**

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