



Abington Township Shade Tree Commission Recommended Shade Trees: updated October 2025

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Tree Common Name	Tree Botanical Name	Mature Size	Growth Rate	Light	Street Tree	Showy Flowers	Evergreen	Notes
Southern Sugar Maple	<i>Acer floridanum</i>	Height: 20'-60', Spread: 25'-40'	Medium	Full sun - part shade				Fall color of yellow, orange, and red.
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Height: 40'-60', Spread: same	Fast	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Orange-red fall color
Silver Maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Height: 50'-80', Spread: 35'-50'	Fast	Full sun - part shade				Exceptionally fast growth, but as a consequence the wood is not strong and the tree is more prone to storm damage, particularly if not pruned into a good shape
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Height: 60'-70', Spread: 40'-50'	Slow	Full sun - part shade				Fall color of yellow, orange, and red.
Ohio Buckeye	<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	Height: 20-40', Spread: same	Medium	Full sun - part shade		Yes		White flowers in spring and distinctive "buckeye" seeds in fall
River Birch	<i>Betula nigra</i>	Height: 40'-70', Spread: 40'-60'	Medium	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Attractive peeling bark
Bitternut Hickory	<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	Height: 50'-80', Spread: 30'-50'	Slow	Full sun				Appropriate for wet areas
Pignut Hickory	<i>Carya glabra</i>	Height: 50'-60', Spread: 25'-35'	Slow	Full sun - part shade				Edible nuts; yellow fall color
Pecan	<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	Height: 75-100', Spread: 40-70'	Slow	Full sun				Edible pecans
Shagbark Hickory	<i>Carya ovata</i>	Height: 60'-80', Spread: 30'-50'	Slow	Full sun - part shade				Attractive peeling bark; edible nuts; yellow fall color
Mockernut Hickory	<i>Carya tomentosa</i>	Height: 60'-80', Spread: 40-60'	Slow	Full sun				Edible nuts; yellow fall color
Southern Catalpa	<i>Catalpa bignonioides</i>	Height: 30-40', Spread: same	Medium	Full sun - part shade		Yes		White flowers in late spring
Northern Catalpa	<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	Height: 40-60', Spread: 20-40'	Fast	Full sun	Yes	Yes		White flowers in early summer
Sugarberry	<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	Height: 60-80', Spread: same	Fast	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Can handle tough conditions
Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Height: 40'-60', Spread: same	Medium-Fast	Full sun	Yes			Can handle tough conditions
Atlantic White Cedar	<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	Height: 30'-50', Spread: 30'-40'	Medium	Full sun - part shade			Yes	Appropriate for wet conditions
Yellowwood	<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	Height: 30-50', Spread: 40-55'	Medium	Full sun		Yes		Hanging white flowers in late spring/early summer. The branches can be damaged in storms if not properly pruned.



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American Beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Height: 50'-70', Spread: 50'-70'	Slow	Full sun - part shade				Holds leaves through winter. Warning: the emerging threat of Beech Leaf Disease imperils the viability of these trees. Use them sparingly and with the knowledge that they may decline.
Thornless Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> var. <i>inermis</i>	Height: 30'-70', Spread: same	Fast	Full sun	Yes			Yellow fall color
Kentucky Coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	Height: 60-80'; Spread: 40-50'	Medium	Full sun	Certain cultivars			The species is dioecious, meaning that only the female will produce seed pods and needs a male nearby to pollinate. Cultivars like Espresso are male and make good street trees.
American Holly	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	Height: 40-50', Spread: 18'-40'	Slow	Full sun - part shade			Yes	Our native evergreen holly with attractive red berries. The species is dioecious, meaning that only the female will produce fruit and needs a male nearby to pollinate.
Black Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Height: 50'-75', Spread: 30'-50'	Medium	Full sun				Roots produce a chemical that inhibits the growth of many common non-native plants such as tomatoes. Walnuts are edible.
Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Height: 40'-50', Spread: 8'-20'	Medium	Full sun			Yes	Evergreen tree that produces attractive blue berries that persist into winter
American Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Height: 60'-80', Spread: 40'-75'	Fast	Full sun				Excellent fall color. Gumballs can be a nuisance, but there are cultivars that produce few; animals eat the seeds in the gumballs.
Tulip Poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Height: 70'-120', Spread: 30'-50'	Fast	Full sun		Yes		Very fast growing and long-lived, but will self-prune by dropping branches as it ages; large flowers
Cucumber Tree	<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	Height: 40-70', Spread: 20-35'	Medium	Full sun - part shade		Yes		Large yellow, tulip-like flowers followed by cucumber-like seedcones that mature to an attractive red
Southern Magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Height: 60'-80', Spread: 30'-50'	Slow-medium	Full sun - part shade		Yes	Yes	Fragrant, creamy white flowers in late spring. Evergreen tree with leathery leaves that are dark green on top and rusty underneath.
Bigleaf Magnolia	<i>Magnolia macrophylla</i>	Height: 30-40', Spread: same	Slow	Full sun - part shade		Yes		Large leaves, more than 2' in length. Showy white flowers in spring.
Red Mulberry	<i>Morus rubra</i>	Height: 40-50', Spread: same	Medium	Full sun - part shade				Produces edible mulberry fruits



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Black Tupelo	Nyssa sylvatica	Height: 30'-70', Spread: 30'-45'	Slow	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Among the best bright red fall color
American Hophornbeam	Ostrya virginiana	Height: 30'-50', Spread: 25'	Slow	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Cascading flowers look like hops.
Norway Spruce	Picea abies	Height: 40'-60', Spread: 25'-30'	Medium- Fast	Full sun			Yes	Warning: This species is approved for use in Abington Township only if: 1) no other native evergreen trees species are appropriate based on the unique conditions of the property; or 2) if all appropriate native evergreens are also being used and it is necessary to use a non-native evergreen species to preserve appropriate species diversity. This species has the potential to become invasive in our area, so it should be used sparingly and as a last resort.
Serbian Spruce	Picea omorika	Height: 40'-60', Spread: 15'-20'	Slow	Full sun - part shade			Yes	Warning: This species is approved for use in Abington Township only if: 1) no other native evergreen trees species are appropriate based on the unique conditions of the property; or 2) if all appropriate native evergreens are also being used and it is necessary to use a non-native evergreen species to preserve appropriate species diversity. This species has the potential to become invasive in our area, so it should be used sparingly and as a last resort.
Eastern White Pine	Pinus strobus	Height: 50'-80', Spread: 20'-40'	Fast	Full sun - part shade			Yes	Evergreen. Warning: these trees are not expected to fare well with rising temperatures due to global warming. They should fare well for the time being, but use sparingly.
Loblolly Pine	Pinus taeda	Height: 40'-90', Spread: 20'-40'	Fast	Full sun			Yes	Evergreen.
Virginia Pine	Pinus virginiana	Height: 50'-80', Spread: 25'-35'	Medium	Full sun			Yes	Evergreen.
American Sycamore	Platanus occidentalis	Height: 80'-130', Spread: 50'-80'	Fast	Full sun - part shade	Yes			As tree matures, the trunk turns white. Mature sycamores are striking specimens.



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Black Cherry	Prunus serotina	Height: 50'-60', Spread: 20'-30'	Fast	Full sun - part shade		Yes		Among the fastest growing native trees, with exceptional wildlife value. As a consequence of the fast growth, it is more prone to damage.
White Oak	Quercus alba	Height: 80'-100', Spread: 50'-80'	Slow-medium	Full sun	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Swamp White Oak	Quercus bicolor	Height: 60'-80', Spread: 50'-80'	Medium	Full sun	Yes			Warning: these trees are not expected to fare well with rising temperatures due to global warming. They should fare well for the time being, but use sparingly.
Overcup Oak	Quercus lyrata	Height: 40'-60', Spread: same	Slow	Full sun	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Bur Oak	Quercus macrocarpa	Height: 70'-80', Spread: same	Slow-medium	Full sun	Yes			Oak with the largest acorns. Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Swamp Chestnut Oak	Quercus michauxii	Height: 60'-100', Spread: 40'-60'	Medium	Full sun	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Chestnut Oak	Quercus montana	Height: 60'-70', Spread: same	Slow-medium	Full sun	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.



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Chinkapin oak	Quercus muehlenbergii	Height: 50'-80', Spread: same	Slow-medium	Full sun	Yes			Good fall color with yellow, yellow brown, and russet. Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Willow Oak	Quercus phellos	Height: 40'-60', Spread: 30'-40'	Medium	Full sun	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Shumard Oak	Quercus shumardii	Height: 40'-60', Spread: same	Medium	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Post Oak	Quercus stellata	Height: 35-50', Spread: same	Slow	Full sun	Yes			Oaks are stately in stature and the most important trees ecologically because they support more wildlife than any other species. Oaks can live for hundreds of years if properly planted and cared for.
Black Willow	Salix nigra	Height: 30-60', Spread: same	Fast	Full sun - part shade				Requires moist soils
Pagoda Dogwood	Swida alternifolia (formerly Cornus alternifolia)	Height: 20', Spread: 15'-20'	Medium	Full sun - part shade	Yes	Yes		Red fall color, attractive berries
Bald Cypress	Taxodium distichum	Height 50'-70', Spread 20'-30'	Medium	Full sun - part shade				Conifer that drops its needles in the fall
American Arborvitae	Thuja occidentalis	Height: 40-60', Spread 10-15'	Slow - Medium	Full sun			Yes	Evergreen, native arborvitae



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Arborvitae Hybrids	Thuja hybrids	Varies	Varies	Full sun			Yes	This includes various Thuja hybrids, such as Thuja standishii x plicata 'Green Giant'. Warning: This species is approved for use in Abington Township only if: 1) no other native evergreen trees species are appropriate based on the unique conditions of the property; or 2) if all appropriate native evergreens are also being used and it is necessary to use a non-native evergreen species to preserve appropriate species diversity. This species has the potential to become invasive in our area, so it should be used sparingly and as a last resort.
American Linden	Tilia americana	Height: 50'-70', Spread: 35'-50'	Medium	Full sun - part shade	Yes			Covered in flowers in late spring that are popular with pollinators
Canadian Hemlock	Tsuga canadensis	Height: 40'-70', Spread: 25'-35'	Medium	Part shade - full shade			Yes	A shade-tolerant evergreen. Warning: these trees are slowly killed by the invasive Hemlock Wooly Adelgid. Only plant these trees if there is a long-term management plan to control the Hemlock Wooly Adelgid.
American Elm	Ulmus americana	Height 60'-80', Spread 50'-80'	Medium-Fast	Full sun	Yes			Plant only a native variety that is resistant to Dutch Elm disease, such as 'Jefferson,' 'Princeton,' 'Valley Forge,' or 'New Harmony'. Beware of inadvertently planting a hybrid of a non-native Elm.