

**Identification Guide  
to the  
Common  
Street Trees  
in  
Saratoga Springs  
(2012 version)**

developed by the  
**Urban Forestry Project  
of  
SUSTAINABLE  
SARATOGA**

for use by its volunteers  
who are working on the  
**Saratoga Tree Survey**  
as an in-kind service,  
donated to the

**City of  
SARATOGA SPRINGS**

as part of the  
DEC Urban Forestry Grant  
awarded to the City  
to fund the development of a  
Master Tree Plan

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**RED OAK**



*Mature tree has large leaves with 7-11 lobes (the parts that stick out) with small hairs on the ends. The sinuses (indentations between lobes) go about half way to the central vein (main line down the center of the leaf).*

**PIN OAK**



*Wide, U-shaped sinuses (see above) that extend almost to the central vein.*

**WHITE OAK**



*Rounded lobes. Both leaf forms are possible, but will always be rounded.*

**SUSTAINABLE SARATOGA recommends that the City and homeowners not plant any species indicated with a  symbol in this brochure.**

**Why are these species NOT RECOMMENDED? Invasive species threaten agriculture & wildlife.**

**Norway Maple:** Both in its green leaf & its reddish-purple leaf cultivars, this native of Europe and Asia has been shown to escape urbanization and colonize local wild forests. This poses an invasive threat, particularly to native sugar maple, a major economic driver in upstate New York and neighboring states. New Hampshire and Massachusetts have already banned the sale and planting of Norway Maple. We believe that New York State should follow suit.

**Japanese Tree Lilac:** Like many ornamentals from Asia, including **Japanese Barberry** and the popular **Winged Burning Bush**, this species has the ability to invade our natural landscapes, displacing native plants. In parts of the state, such non-native ornamentals, undesirable to deer and native wildlife, dominate the forest understory, leaving no room for native plants that provide food to wildlife and nectar to insects.

**Gallery Pear (including cultivars such as Bradford pear):** The US Fish and Wildlife Service lists this species, a native of China, as invasive with the same impacts as listed for the trees above. In addition, although this is a popular landscape tree due to its simple, compact structure and beautiful flowers, as the tree matures, the weak nature of its wood and acute branch angles make it vulnerable to snow and ice breakage. Because of this, most older pears tend to be distorted, broken plants.

**For more information on invasive species, see the NYS DEC Invasive Species List:**  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/65408.html>

**What species and issues should be considered when choosing trees?**

**Diversity is important.** Although a row of similar trees can be attractive, a single-species forest can be quickly wiped out by a single invasive pathogen or insect. During the last century, Dutch Elm disease devastated the urban forest in many cities. Best practice now suggests that no species should exceed about 10% of the urban forest.

**The bigger the tree, the greater the benefits.** Urban trees provide shade, reduce airborne pollution, soak up stormwater, and increase economic activity. The bigger the tree, the more it can do for us. We should choose trees that have the largest mature size possible, given the space, soil and use restrictions of the planting location.

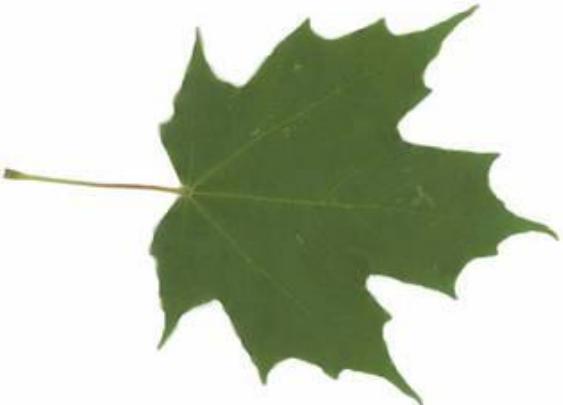
**Plant native or near-native species. Be wary of non-native species.** Not all non-natives are a problem, but many have the potential to become invasive. Plant native or near-native (i.e. from Ohio, not Japan) whenever possible. We all understand that many non-native plants are attractive but over time many prove to have devastating unintended consequences. There are plenty of native and near-native trees to choose from.

**Suggested Species? Good native or near-native trees for Saratoga include:**

**Tall Trees** (where utility lines are not an issue): **American Basswood; River Birch; "No Blight" American Elm; Common Hackberry; Honeylocust; Red Maple; Pin Oak; American Sycamore**

**Short trees** (under utility lines): Always specify a **tree form** (single stem). **Crabapple; Pagoda Dogwood; Hawthorn; American Hornbeam; Eastern redbud; Serviceberry**

### SUGAR MAPLE



Five main lobes with "U" shape between lobes;  
NYS Official Tree, think maple syrup.

### RED MAPLE



Note the round base of the leaf & just three lobes  
with "V" between lobes; very common native tree  
on Saratoga streets.

### ~~NORWAY MAPLE~~ (GREEN LEAF)



Invasive  
Exotic  
Plants

Similar to Sugar Maple but leaves are usually  
larger and when pulled from branch there will be a  
milky white sap at the base of the leaf stalk.

### AMERICAN Sycamore



Mottled bark helps differentiate from maples.

### ~~NORWAY MAPLE~~ (CRIMSON KING)



Same leaf as green-leaf Norway maple but leaves  
are reddish purple in summer.

### SILVER MAPLE



Deep, narrow indentations between lobes.

**BOXELDER****SWEETGUM**

*Three leaves on the same stalk. Push them together and they look like a maple leaf.*

*Note the star-like leaf and unique fruit (do not eat!).*

**HAWTHORN**

*Several different leaf shapes, but all are small. Popular cultivars have a single stem & no thorns.*

**HORSECHESTNUT**

*Five leaves on the same stalk but all are attached at the same spot. Leaves are jagged.*

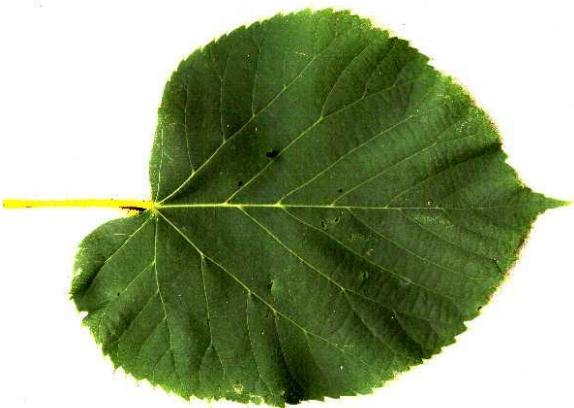
**AMERICAN ELM**

*The historic elm tree that succumbed to the blight, so fairly rare. Leaf is asymmetrical. Underside of leaf is rough like sandpaper.*

**NON-NATIVE ELM CULTIVARS**

*Very common recent planting in Saratoga; vase-like appearance with branches spreading up and outward; thin leaf canopy; many do not look healthy.*

### AMERICAN BASSWOOD



Leaf (5-6" long and almost as wide) is asymmetrical (as is the elm).

### NORTHERN CATALPA



Large leaves (6-12" long; 4-8" across); long, drooping seed pods.

### PAPER BIRCH



White, often peeling bark; leaf almost heart-shaped.

### RIVER BIRCH



Distinctive peeling bark and color. Multi-trunked.

### EASTERN COTTONWOOD



Base of leaf (3-7" long) is flat, so more triangular than heart-shaped. Different bark from birch.

### LITTLELEAF LINDEN



Heart-shaped leaf (2-4" long), with sharp point at tip. Just like basswood (a relative), only smaller.

### CALLENDAR PEAR (AKA BRADFORD PEAR)



Invasive  
Exotic  
Plants

Very common street planting in Saratoga in recent years; white flowers in May, round mini "pears" after flowering.

### CRABAPPLE



Look for beautiful flowers in the spring and small apples after flowering. Leaves vary but are always small and have a tip and a straight central vein.

### SARGENT CHERRY



Beautiful pink flowers in April/May. Shiny, dark green leaves with serrated edges and leaf tip. Bark is a reddish brown.

### BLACKGUM



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Dark green, glossy leaves. Rarely serrated. Broad, twisted, horizontal branching.

### JAPANESE TREE LILAC



Invasive  
Exotic  
Plants

Relatively small tree with drooping heart-shaped leaves. USDA shows this non-native tree to be present in the wild in NY, NH, MA, and WY.

### GREEN ASH



Compound leaves, opposite each other. Stick is measuring one leaf with 7 leaflets! Look for diamond patterned bark.

### KENTUCKY COFFETREE



Compound leaves like Ash. Largest leaves of any northeastern tree (up to 3' long!). Female plants have pods and beans that settlers used for "coffee."

### BLACK LOCUST



This is one compound leaf, with usually 9-19 leaflets. Leaflets are blue-green on top, silvery-grey on bottom and bigger than honeylocust.

### HONEYLOCUST



This is one leaf with lots and lots of leaflets. Tree is medium sized with very spread out branches.

### AMERICAN BEECH



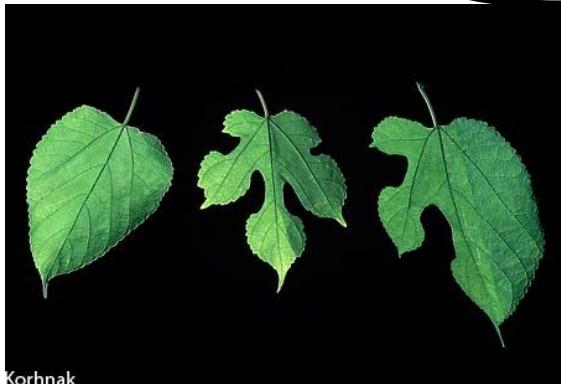
Bark is smooth grey and leaves are papery thin.

### GINKGO



There are no other leaves like this one.

### MULBERRY (RED=NATIVE; WHITE=ASIAN)



Korhnak

Look for multiple leaf shapes on the same tree and purple or white "raspberries" which are edible and delicious.

### EASTERN WHITE PINE



Five "soft" needles per cluster.

### NORWAY SPRUCE



Drooping branches and hanging cones (5-6").

### EASTERN HEMLOCK



Flat needles with white lines on underside.

### EASTERN RED CEDAR



Needles look like scales when close up. Red cedar needles are arranged perpendicular to each other = spiky to the touch.

### NORTHERN WHITE CEDAR



Needles are scales like Red Cedar, but are arranged all in the same plane = smooth to the touch.