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SMALL FLOWERING TREES

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One of the most desirable, yet sometimes the most overlooked plant materials for landscape use are the many kinds of small flowering trees. They have many characteristics that make them necessary to the success of any planting composition. On a small property with its modest dwelling, small to medium sized trees are effective in establishing the proper scale relationship between the building and its surroundings. These trees, of varying heights can be used to overcome the monotony of the roof line and to soften other harsh architectural lines in the structure; and can also be used effectively for screening and enclosure.

In addition, they maintain a variety of form, texture and color that, when properly considered, can be used to add unique dimensions to any landscape development. For example, color is expressed in many ways through the foliage, flowers and fruits. Those that have interesting and colorful fruits that persist through the cold winter season add a bit of color to a dreary landscape, and most importantly, they provide food for birds and other wildlife. Some small trees have color and/or unusual textures in their bark and twigs. This quality or character in plants can be used most effectively for enrichment.

The following list includes small trees that are readily available and can be grown under a wide range of cultural conditions.

1. Acer ginnala - (Amur maple) Has an upright rounded form. Its dense branches makes it ideal as a screen. The brilliant red autumn foliage color is preceded by interesting winged seeds that are red and conspicuous.
2. Acer palmatum - (Japanese maple) A dense, rounded, often mound-like habit. Varieties are available in green or red leaves with many different leaf shapes. It grows very slowly and prefers a deep rich soil and a location where it is protected from the wind.
3. Amelanchier canadensis - (Service berry, Shadblow) A narrow, upright habit, developing a rounded canopy with age. A profusion of delicate white flowers in April. Maroon-purple berry like fruits are edible and are a favorite food for birds.

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4. Cercis canadensis - (Redbud) Irregularly shaped tree 25 to 30 feet, with blackish bark and intense purple-pink pea-like flowers 1/2 in. long in April. Pure white and double pink forms are known.
5. Chionanthus virginicus - (White fringe tree) A native ornamental tree. Its fleecy white flowers are produced in profusion in late May or early June. One of the last plants to produce leaves in the spring.
6. Cornus florida - (Flowering Dogwood) One of America's favorite small flowering trees. Shining white four-petaled bracts are followed by showy scarlet fruits. Prefers light filtered shade on somewhat acid soil. Pink, red, and double-flowered white forms are available. Also weeping and variegated-leaf forms. Autumn color is a rich glowing red.
7. Cornus kousa - (Japanese Dogwood) Growth habit somewhat similar to Cornus florida. Blooms about 3 weeks later than Cornus florida and the tips of the flower bracts are pointed. The fruits are raspberry like and bright red in late summer.
8. Cornus mas - (Cornelian cherry) Tall shrub or small tree to 15 ft. Tiny yellow clusters of flowers in February during mild winter, March-April otherwise. Fruits scarlet, cherry-like and edible but quite tart. Also has attractive red fall foliage. Does well under city conditions.
9. Crataegus oxycanthus Paulii - (Paul's scarlet hawthorne) A small, round-topped, low branching tree. Flowers double, bright scarlet, one of the most showy of the hawthornes.
10. Franklana altamaha - (Franklana) A pyramidal, rather open small tree found in Georgia by John Bartram 200 years ago. Showy white flowers with yellow stamens in the fall. Plant in full sun for best orange-red fall foliage color.
11. Gleditsia triacanthos inermis - (Thornless honey locust) An open, irregular tree, thornless and sometimes fruitless. Many varieties of the thornless honey locust available, each with some outstanding feature. Has been used as a substitute for American elm.
12. Ilex decidua - (Possum haw) Common over a wide area of southeastern United States. Rounded head with spreading branches. Abundance of orange to scarlet berries in fall, persisting into the winter. Will tolerate moist swampy conditions.
13. Koelreuteria paniculata - (Golden rain tree) Rounded tree with compound leaves. Flowers yellow in upright pyramidal clusters in early summer. Fruits yellowish brown bladder-like pods. Grows well in a wide range of soils.
14. Laburnum wateri vossii - (Golden chain tree) Stiffly upright small tree. Flowers colorful, yellow, pea-like in pendulous clusters in late May. All parts are poisonous to eat.

15. Lagerstroemia indica - (Crepe myrtle) Grown widely throughout the south for its profusion of summer blooms. Several varieties are available with white, pink, red, lavender or bluish flowers. Upright to rounded growth habit.
16. Magnolia stellata - (Star magnolia) A rounded dense tree with dark green leaves. Flowers in early to mid April, flowers white with 12 or more ribbon like petals, fragrant. Early flowers susceptible to frost injury.
17. Magnolia soulangeana - (Saucer magnolia) Low branching small tree with a rounded head. Flowers to 6 inches across, white to purple, cup shaped, appearing before the leaves. Blooms in late April to early May.
18. Malus species - (Flowering crabapple) Small bushy tree with spreading branches. Many species and varieties available. Flowers, single and double, white, pink to carmine red. Very showy. Wide variety of fruit colors and sizes.
19. Oxydendrum arboreum - (Sourwood) Small tree with a spreading form and drooping branches. Leaves glossy, leathery dark green. Turn a brilliant red in fall. Hanging clusters of white urn-shaped flowers change to tan colored fruit. Prefers an acid soil.
20. Prunus persica - (Flowering peach) Although it is one of the most brilliant of the flowering fruit trees, it is short lived and subject to pest and disease. Generally requires too much care for average homeowner. Double flowering forms best for ornamental use.
21. Prunus cerasifera pissardi - (Flowering plum) Outstanding for its dark purple leaf foliage that contrasts nicely with other plants. Showy pink and white flowers in April.
22. Prunus serrulata Kwansan - (Kwansan cherry) The best of all the double flowered Oriental cherries. Flowers April to mid May. Flowers are double, deep pink to 2½ inches in diameter. It has an upright vase shape growth habit.
23. Prunus subhirtella 'pendula' - (Weeping Higan cherry) This is the most popular variety of the Higan cherries, with graceful pendulous branches, and single pink flowers in April before the leaves.
24. Pyrus calleryana Bradfordi - (Bradford callery pear) Glossy green foliage turns a bright crimson in the fall. Profusion of white flowers in April and May. Vigorous, adaptable, easy to grow, disease free. A good street tree and will survive in downtown city area.

