



# FOR THE *Love of Trees*

PHOTOS AND STORY BY MELANIE REKOLA

In the urban environment, trees are drastically underused. Many people are concerned with growth of trees 50 to 100 years after they are planted.

Conversely, if everyone was concerned about this, no one would plant any trees at all. Considering the growth of the human populous, we should be more concerned about having enough oxygen to sustain us in the long term; as well as the many other benefits trees give us.

When placed properly, trees reduce our heating and air conditioning costs, reduce overflow into sewers, can provide food and shelter from wind, provide food and homes for local wildlife and contribute to a multitude of ecosystems we are likely not even aware of.

Unbeknownst to many, fall is an ideal time for planting. Whether it be those heavily discounted potted trees, shrubs or perennials on sale at your local garden centre or “A” stock wire basket trees from a local grower, the time to plant is now.

When choosing a tree, consider the size required. A wire basket tree is always preferred as it is healthier for the tree, plus larger caliper and heights are available. The survival rate of wire basket trees is also much greater but most homeowners won't be able to plant this weight of tree on their own. If access is an issue, a potted variety may be the only suitable option.

Consider this: trees in a pot tend to have less branching, smaller caliper and usually a poorer form. Nonetheless, with proper pruning almost anything is fixable as far as form and branching, and you can plant it yourself without machinery and little manpower.

There are so many gorgeous trees available. Here are a few of my favourites.



## MELANIE'S PLANT PICKS:

**Glenleven Linden:** I love Lindens! The heart shape of the leaf mimics the tree's form. It is very sculptural and can even be used in a more formal garden setting. They even make good street trees as they can tolerate road salt and pollution.

**Serviceberry:** I mention this tree often and always say "every property has room for at least one Serviceberry." Its small stature makes it very easy to place. It begins the growing season with delicate white flowers, followed by blue berries in the late summer, and then finally in fall, the leaves turn scarlet. It is really a three-season stunner.

**Princeton Gold Maple:** This maple has beautiful chartreuse leaves that really show up in the distance. In a sea of mid-green that is most plant materials it is important to vary your greens for interest. For all maples, the flowers are somewhat inconspicuous in early spring, but of course I still notice them. Take note this coming spring when the Maples are in flower. These flowers are very small, but perfect and delicate. For another alternate maple try **Paperbark Maple**. As the name suggests the bark is peeling, providing good winter interest.

**Horse Chestnut:** This slow grower grows BIG in time. Its leaves are unique and divided, resembling a hand. I love the shape and the thick trunks. It has very large, white panicle blooms in later spring. But beware the "chestnuts" that follow, as they are interesting looking but poisonous in their raw form.

**Dawn Redwood:** This rare "deciduous conifer" looks like an evergreen in summer, but loses its leaves in winter. Its needles are softer and thicker than a true evergreen. It grows very large and is "bottom heavy" as most evergreens but has an interesting symmetry of branching habit for winter interest.

**Eastern Redbud:** This tree grows wide rather than tall with beautiful pink flowers that arrive before the leaves in early spring. The huge heart-shaped leaves that follow are almost tropical looking, very dense and provide good shade below.

**River Birch:** This birch is resistant to the bronze birch borer, which is wreaking havoc on our beloved Paperbark Birch. River Birch has the same airy structure and leaf as the Paperbark, but has lovely pink peeling bark instead of white.

**London Planetree:** This large specimen I rarely see. Its claim to fame is its very decorative camouflage-patterned bark! The leaves resemble a maple's and its lovely round but spiky fruit adds another layer to its interest.

**Profusion Crabapple:** I love the "aged beauty" that is the habit of all Crabapples' bark and branching. This beauty's leaves are purplish and the flower buds start out red and then open pink. It is my favourite of the whole Crabapple family.

**Magnolia:** From white flowering "Royal Star" to the many varieties of saucer Magnolias, I love numerous things about these shrubby trees. They have beautiful smooth bark, substantial trunks and branching, thick bright leaves and huge flowers that open in spring before the leaves unfurl.

To me there is nothing as beautiful as a mature tree. It offers what I refer to as old beauty. Canada being a new country comparative to the rest of the world, we tend to glamourize youth and seemingly don't appreciate the beauty in maturity as older cultures do. Let us open our minds to celebrate and appreciate "old beauty" and the majestic splendour of established trees. **OH**



PAPERBARK MAPLE



SAUCER MAGNOLIA



PRINCETON GOLD MAPLE



SERVICEBERRY

online

For tips on how to plant a tree  
visit [www.ourhomesmagazine.com/trees](http://www.ourhomesmagazine.com/trees)