

CROWDED HOUSE

There are some interesting selections of small to medium sized trees that make a good choice for confined areas. Many of these cultivars are selections that nurserymen have made from original native or common species.

ACRE CAMPESTRE

Field Maples are a good starting point as they can grow in shade and poor soils. The parent trees can be irregularly shaped but better selections are available, and we prefer ACRE campestre 'Elegans' which has a compact, upswept habit with good mildew resistance, and Acre campestre 'Red Shine' with its attractive dark red shoots and leaves in Spring.

ALNUS INCANA

Alders will grow in some of the worst soils, even cold, damp, north facing areas. A selection that will brighten up these areas is, *Alnus incana* 'Aurea' which will make a small tree with yellow leaves, shoots and orange catkins.

BETULA PENDULA

The Birches are a huge family of trees, having a wide geographical range with some unusual choices. The Himalayan Birch is now very overplanted but the *ermanii* group are compact growers and a lovely recent selection is: *Betula albosinensis* 'Fascination' which has a white to pinkish peeling bark but more noticeably, very long catkins and dark green foliage.

CARPINUS BETULUS

The Hornbeams may seem an unlikely choice for a compact tree but *Carpinus japonica* is a small to medium sized, slow growing Hornbeam with unusual seed pods that resemble Hops in the Autumn. Turns a lovely golden yellow in Autumn.

CRATAGEUS MONOGYNA

Hawthorns are a large family of trees, particularly good on impoverished ground and will adapt to difficult locations. One of the best is *Crataegus prunifolia* 'Splendens' with stunning Autumn orange and reds, bright red fruits through the winter and glossy dark green foliage in the summer.

MALUS BACCATA

Many of the flowering Crabs have superior colour than the Cherries, but suffer from scab and mildew infections throughout the summer. *Malus baccata* 'Street Parade' is one of the more recent introductions that is scab and mildew resistant plus it has a very attractive narrow upswept crown. Pure white flowers are followed by bunches of small, dark red fruits in the Autumn.



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SORBUS AUCUPARIA

These decorative trees have been widely planted over the years, however they can be very sensitive to soil conditions, particularly wet soils. We now have a new introduction from China with much improved health and vigour - Sorbus 'Do Dong' this has bold and glossy green leaves and rich Autumn colours.

TILIA PLATYPHYLLOS

Another unusual choice is a small headed Lime. The selection Tialia platyphyllos 'Orebro' - pronounced erbrew - is a very narrow, columnar, slow growing Lime. Also known as the Swedish Lime, this is a wonderful small headed Lime with perfect, symmetrical, branch work.

ULMUS CARPINIFOLIA

Again, a family of huge forest trees has an unusual, compact form - Ulmus carpinifolia 'Vredei' - is a narrow upright form with lovely soft yellow to green foliage. Ideal for training in to an arch, but not suited to wet ground, best planted as a feathered tree.

MOP HEAD TREES

A different approach to producing a small tree is to pick the species that will flourish, even if regularly pruned back hard. The most successful choices are Catalpa bungeii which has massive bright green leaves. Robinia pseudoacacia 'Umbraculifera' with delicate, frond like leaves. Platanus acerifolia 'Alphens Globe' the familiar London Plane but with compact growth.

All of these choices are improved by regular pruning as the leave size and freshness of the colour is significantly better. Cutting back to a knuckle every one or two years is best.

UPRIGHT TREES

Another solution is to use upright or fastigate trees. By far the commonest is the fastigate Hornbeam, to be seen on every business park, however this has the drawback of becoming very broad with age.

A selection that goes some way to avoiding this is Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine' Fastigate Oaks also look very promising when young but have a habit of branches falling open with age. A selection that is less likely to is Quercus robur 'Koster' however this is a grafted form and is correspondingly more expensive.



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