

Uncommon and Special Trees to Promote Diversity in Yards, Parks, and Open Spaces
San Francisco Urban Forestry Council
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San Francisco has a unique climate with multiple microclimates, where our open spaces (including parks, private yards, and open spaces under federal jurisdiction, such as the Presidio) present an opportunity to plant a wide variety of trees that are not yet common here. Many of these trees are not well suited as street trees, because they cannot tolerate compacted soils or their canopies or root systems cannot easily adapt to fit within street-side infrastructure. The following list of trees are considered well-adapted to San Francisco's climate and conditions, but are under-represented in our open spaces. They present an opportunity for experimentation and improving San Francisco's urban forestry diversity. Though some of these species may be difficult to find, the Urban Forestry Council recommends considering these species to add diversity to the urban forest. To view many of these trees in person, visit the plant collections at the Botanical Gardens at Strybing Arboretum.

Size	Evergreen/ Deciduous	Species	Notes
Small - Less than 20' tall at maturity	Evergreen	<i>Acer laevigatum</i> (smooth maple or Nepal maple)	Broad crown; semi-weeping
		<i>Alectryon excelsus</i> (titoki)	Broad crown; small red fruits. Moderate growth speed
		<i>Carpodetus serratus</i> (marbleleaf)	Endemic to New Zealand
		<i>Cussonia spicata</i>	Dramatic foliage texture
		<i>Elaeocarpus decipiens</i> (Japanese blueberry tree)	Upright habit; tiny white flowers; blue-black fruits
		<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> 'Helene Strybing' (New Zealand tea tree)	Broad, low crown; pink flowers; often multi-trunked
		<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i> (swamp paperbark)	Broad, dense crown; covered in white flowers in early summer; attractive whitish peeling bark
		<i>Meryta sinclairii</i> (puka)	Round headed; bold foliage texture
		<i>Sophora microphylla</i> & <i>Sophora tetraptera</i> . (kowhai)	Rounded crown; yellow flowers
		<i>Pittosporum erioloma</i> (Lord Howe Island Pittosporum)	Upright, irregular pagoda shape
Small - Less than 20' tall at maturity	Deciduous	<i>Acer griseum</i> (paperbark maple)	Broad crown; reddish peeling bark; good fall color. Shallow roots

Medium - 20-35' tall at maturity	Evergreen	<i>Acmena smithii</i> (lilly-pilly tree)	Dense, colorful fruits; shiny green foliage. Example on JFK Drive in Eastern GGP is doing well; fast-growing. Requires some fertility for best appearance.
		<i>Auranticarpa rhombifolia</i> (Queensland pittosporum)	Broad crown; orange fruits. Formerly Pittosporum
		<i>Banksia integrifolia</i> (coast banksia)	Upright habit; creamy flowers; drought tolerant
		<i>Brahea edulis</i> (Guadalupe palm)	Fan palm; drought tolerant. Single specimen established on north side of JFK just west of intersection with Kezar Drive. Slow growing, sun or shade.
		<i>Cassia leptophylla</i> (gold medallion tree)	Broad crown; bright golden flowers. Good example on Cole at Hayes.
		<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i> (sweetshade)	Upright habit; yellow flowers; fast growing
		<i>Knightia excelsa</i> (rewa-rewa)	Upright habit; curious reddish flowers
		<i>Metrodiseros umbellata</i> (southern rata)	Broad crown; showy flowers. Very slow growing.
		<i>Magnolia champaca</i> (joy perfume tree) or <i>Magnolia x alba</i> (fragrant champaca)	Upright habit; intensely fragrant white flowers
		<i>Podocarpus totara</i> (totara)	Brown conical habit; dark green needles. Slow growing; creates dense shade.
		<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i> (lancewood)	Broad crown
<i>Pseudopanax ferox</i> (fierce lancewood)	Columnar in youth, but rounded with age. Very slow growing		
<i>Quercus rugosa</i> (netleaf oak)	Broad crown; bold foliage texture		
Medium - 20-35' tall at maturity	Deciduous	<i>Acer buergerianum</i> (trident maple)	Broad crown; good fall color. Shallow roots
		<i>Acer campestre</i> (hedge maple)	Broad crown; yellow fall color. Shallow roots
		<i>Acer davidii</i> (David's maple) & <i>Acer capillipes</i> (snake-bark maple)	Broad crown; striped bark; good fall color. Shallow roots
		<i>Betula utilis</i> var. <i>jacquemontii</i> (Himalayan birch)	Upright habit; brilliant white bark. Fast growing; narrow crotches.
		<i>Parrotia persica</i> (Persian ironwood)	Upright habit if grown from seeds; excellent fall color

Tall – More than 35’ tall at maturity	Evergreen	<i>Agathis australis</i> (<i>New Zealand kauri</i>)	Tall narrow habit; tough leathery leaves. Very slow growing, but faster than <i>A. robusta</i>
		<i>Agathis robusta</i> (<i>Queensland kauri</i>)	Tall narrow habit; tough leathery leaves. Very slow growing
		<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i> (<i>Norfolk Island pine</i>)	Distinct horizontal branching; popular tree in SF
		<i>Casuarina suberosa</i> (<i>syn. Allocasuarina littoralis</i>)	Irregular upright habit; fine texture. Drought tolerant.
		<i>Ceroxylon spp.</i> (<i>wax palm</i>)	Elegant feather palm; silvery gray trunk. Slow growing. Good in lawn
		<i>Chiranthodendron pentadactylon</i> (<i>hand flower tree</i>)	Broad crown; Tall red flowers, bold foliage texture
		<i>Corymbia calophylla</i> (<i>marri gum; Port Gregory gum</i>)	Broad crown; showy flowers in summer; Formerly Eucalyptus
		<i>Corymbia maculata</i> (<i>spotted gum</i>)	Broad upright habit; attractive bark. Formerly Eucalyptus; fast-growing
		<i>Corymbia pauciflora</i> (<i>snow gum</i>)	Broad upright habit; attractive silvery white bark. Formerly Eucalyptus; fast seedling growth; plant young.
		<i>Cryptocarya alba</i> (<i>peumo or Chilean acorn</i>)	Broad upright habit; aromatic foliage
		<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> (<i>Japanese cryptomeria</i>)	Conical habit with pendulous branches; fine needles
		<i>Cupressus guadalupensis</i> (<i>Guadalupe cypress</i>)	California Native; Rounded crown with age; scale-like needles
		<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	Upright habit with drooping branches. Very slow growing.
		<i>Ficus macrophylla</i> (<i>Moreton Bay fig</i>)	Broad crown; deep green leaves; bold foliage texture. Shallow roots; creates dense shade.
		<i>Ficus rubiginosa</i> (<i>rustyleaf fig</i>)	Deep green leaves, rusty undersides; bold foliage texture. Good example at Masonic & Fell
		<i>Hoheria sp. (Hoheria populnea, e.g.)</i> (<i>New Zealand lacebark</i>)	Upright habit; white flowers. Suckers from the roots; very fast-growing
<i>Jubaea chilensis</i> (<i>Chilean palm</i>)	Feather palm; broad crown of leaves; silvery trunk; sun-loving. Magnificent specimen at JFK & Fuchsia Drive; drought-tolerant, prefers sun. Slow-growing until trunking phase, then moderate growth speed.		
<i>Livistona australis</i> (<i>cabbage tree palm</i>)	Fan palm. Slow growing when young.		
<i>Metrosideros excelsa</i> <i>special color forms</i> (<i>New Zealand Christmas tree</i>)	Moderate growth rate; broad crown, colorful flowers. ‘Aurea’ variety has yellow flowers; several examples in San Francisco		

		<i>Metrosideros robusta</i> (northern rata)	Broad dense crown; showy red flowers in summer; slow & unusual but very well-adapted
		<i>Nothofagus dombeyi</i> (Dumbeye's beech or coihue)	Upright rounded habit
		<i>Parajubaea cocoides</i> (Quito palm)	Feather palm. Fast growing, sun-loving.
		<i>Pinus wallichiana</i> (Himalayan white pine)	Conical habit; long delicate needles
		<i>Quercus chrysolepis</i> (canyon live oak)	San Francisco Native; broad crown. Drought tolerant
		<i>Quercus robur</i> (English oak)	Broad crown
		<i>Quillaja saponaria</i> (soapbark)	Broad, oak-like crown; small white flowers. Drought tolerant
		<i>Quercus tomentella</i> (island oak)	California Native; broad upright habit; bold foliage texture
		<i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> (turpentine tree)	Upright habit; white flowers. Drought tolerant
		<i>Wollemia nobilis</i> (Wollemi pine)	Discovered in 1994 in Australia, thought to have been extinct and previously known only through fossil records
Tall – More than 35' tall at maturity	Deciduous	<i>Pterocarya spp.</i> (wingnut)	Broad crown; pendulous catkins and seedheads
		<i>Quercus garryana</i> (Oregon white oak)	California Native; broad crown. Drought tolerant
		<i>Quercus kelloggii</i> (California black oak)	California Native; Upright habit; good fall color
		<i>Tilia tomentosa</i> (silver linden)	Broad upright crown