

## Choosing a Tree for your Garden

Trees are a great asset to your garden, but as gardens have generally got smaller it is more important to choose wisely. There are many benefits of having trees in your garden not only do they give a focal point to the garden design, they increase the number of wildlife visitors, give shade in the hot summers! And herald the changing of the seasons.

The size of your garden will determine the number and ultimate size of the trees you can plant. If we consider the modern garden you will have room for at least one small tree and possibly a group of three. Obviously in small gardens the slow growing large forest trees like Oak, Ash, Beech etc are highly unsuitable, although there are a few small growing ornamental cultivars of these varieties but they can be difficult to obtain.

However, with such a diversity of size shape and effect, somewhere there exists a tree to suit most if not all tastes

and situations, there are trees that are suitable for even the smallest gardens and it should not be necessary to deform a tree by drastic pruning and lopping to make it conform. Planting a tree which when mature, will be too large for its position, is all too common these days nor is it a recent problem, a tour of small gardens on any established housing estate will reveal examples of trees planted without any thought of the future. I have often been consulted for advice on the choice of a suitable tree only to be assailed with the remark: "I know it will be too big eventually but then it will be someone else's problem".

Before planting, the first two questions people ask are "How fast will it grow?" and "how big will it be eventually?"

These are quite naturally important considerations. However, unlike manufactured articles, trees cannot be made to measure and due to a variety of reasons such as soil, aspect, rainfall, etc, trees (even those of the same

species) do not always behave in the same way or grow at the same speed. I would consider a small tree would get to an eventual size of 3 – 10 metres under average growing conditions and a very small tree would grow under 3 metres. Habit or shape is also very important in choosing your tree there are generally five basic shapes, Spreading, Conical, Broadly Columnar, Columnar (*fastigiated*) and Weeping.

When you have decided you are going to plant a tree the best advice I can give you is to research the many species and varieties in a good tree book, then go to your nurseryman with a list and ask his advice with regard to the rate of growth and suitability.

We are always happy to give planting advice and look forward to seeing you at the nursery in Werekham.

Happy Gardening!  
Paul Markwell *Owner*

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