



Tree Selection.....A Journey

Futures in Applied Arboriculture Conference 9/17/2025



City of Seattle

Our mission, vision, and core values

Mission: deliver a high-quality transportation system for Seattle

Vision: connected people, places, and products

Committed to **5 core values** to create a city that is:

- Safe
- Interconnected
- Affordable
- Vibrant
- Innovative

For **all**

What We Do

- Manage street trees along streets throughout the City of Seattle.
- Support property owner requests for permit approval to plant, prune or remove street trees.
- Provide design & construction direction for private and public development projects.



Move Seattle Levy

- We have planted approximately 400 trees per year since 2016.
- Inventoried trees have increased from 124,000 in 2016 to 208,000 with 2 areas yet to be completed. Data collection has been performed each summer by a team of college interns.
- This year we are watering over 3,000 trees, which have been planted in the past 5 years.



Canopy analysis 2016 - 2021

- 255 Acres of canopy lost
- Areas with already low canopy lost more
- Forested Parks and Residential areas lost the most.
- Climate Change, insects, diseases and growth are the biggest challenges.



- English Hawthorne 2,448 2552 active
- Callery Pear 1,082 5,204 active
- Blierana Plum 2,362 1,888 active
- Jacqmontii Birch 281 948 active

English Hawthorne

- 2,552 currently in Street Tree Inventory. Genus ranked #6 in inventory.
- 2,448 in removal data set
- Approximately a 50% loss in numbers
- Improved varieties now available (but it's considered invasive).



Callery Pear

- 5,200 currently in Street Tree Inventory.
- 1,100 in removal data set
- Approximately a 18% loss in numbers in the last 5 years
- 7th most common tree in Seattle



Ash varieties

- 4,622 currently in Street Tree Inventory. Genus ranked #9 in inventory.
- 1,380 in removal data set
- Approximately a 23% loss in numbers in the last 20 years – mostly due to storm damage.
- Still waiting for the EAB shoe to drop.



Blueraina Plum

- 1,880 currently in Street Tree Inventory. Prunus is #2 ranked Genus at 16% of total street tree population.
- 2,360 in removal data set
- Approximately a 55% loss in numbers in the last 20 years.
- Popular because of the double flower – most newer cultivars have single flower.



Jacquemonti Birch

- 950 currently in Street Tree Inventory out of 4,800 total birch of all varieties. Genus ranked #8
- 300 in removal data set
- Approximately a 25% loss in numbers in the last 5 years. In 2024 they were 18% of all permitted removals.



Trees that tolerate drought conditions

- Oak varieties
- Ginkgo
- Hackberry
- Kentucky Coffee
- Redbud
- Crape Myrtle
- Chinese Pistache
- Goldenrain
- Elm varieties
- London Planetree
- Desert Willow
- Catalpa



Hackberry – planted 2008

- Not as fast growing as some of the elm cultivars.
- Needs a bit of TLC and early pruning to create good structure
- Psillid issues in Midwest, unknown if that will be a problem here.
- Planted as a 1.5" bare root tree



Chinese Pistache planted Spring 1995

- Nice fall color
- Not generally available in quantities in the nursery trade.
- Large UTRP planting in the 2500 block of 6th Ave W
- Reputed to have a 'deep root system' that will not damage adjacent infrastructure
- Slow/moderate growth rate and needs structural pruning when young



Quercus acutissima – planted 2008

- Planted in 2nd year of Bridging the Gap Levy.
- Looks like a good performer, but considered invasive in some areas.
- Planted as a 1.5" bare root tree



Trees that tolerate “swampy” conditions

- River Birch
- Swamp White Oak
- Baldcypress
- Dawn Redwood
- Red Maple varieties
- Sweetbay Magnolia
- Willow Oak



Inventory Facts

- Extensive tracking of SDOT planted species and varieties. Over 750 different tree types are listed in the Street Tree Inventory.
- Reason for Removal is now tracked in the inventory, and removals remain in the data set under a separate status.



Questions?

Nolan.rundquist@seattle.gov | (206) 615-0957

www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/trees-and-landscaping-program

www.seattle.gov/transportation

Seattle.trees@seattle.gov (206) 684-TREE (8733)

