# Stop Planting These on the Front Range

The trees our soil, hail, and pests kill anyway, the ones garden centers still sell, and the proven tree to plant in each one's place. Print it, take it to the nursery, dodge the regret.

**HOW TO USE THIS**

Every tree here is rated Not Recommended for the Front Range. Each card tells you why it fails here, and the better tree to plant in its place. Cross these off at the nursery.

## IRON CHLOROSIS IN OUR ALKALINE SOIL

No. 01

### Autumn Blaze / Freeman maple

CHLOROSIS

*Acer x freemanii*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Develops iron chlorosis in our alkaline soils, leaves yellow with green veins, then decline.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Bur oak or Kentucky coffeetree for big shade. Want the fall color? Caddo sugar maple shrugs off our alkaline soil.

No. 02

### Globe willow

CHLOROSIS

*Salix matsudana*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Iron chlorosis is common in our alkaline soils.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Hot Wings Tatarian maple or a hawthorn: tough small trees that do not yellow out in our alkaline soil.

No. 03

### Northern pin oak

CHLOROSIS

*Quercus ellipsoidalis*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Develops iron chlorosis in our alkaline soils, leaves yellow with green veins, then decline.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Bur oak or chinkapin oak. Both actually want our high-pH dirt.

No. 04

### Pin oak

CHLOROSIS

*Quercus palustris*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Pin oak struggles in our alkaline soils, almost always develops severe iron chlorosis within 2-3 years.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Bur oak or Shumard oak. Same pyramid shape and red fall, but they take our alkaline soil.

## ASH, AND EMERALD ASH BORER

No. 05

### Ash (all species)

EAB / ASH

*Fraxinus*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is present in Colorado and many Front Range jurisdictions PROHIBIT planting all Fraxinus species. Existing ash will require treatment or removal.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Kentucky coffeetree, common hackberry, or an Accolade elm. Big canopy, no borer.

## WEAK WOOD AND A SHORT LIFE

No. 06

### Silver maple

WEAK WOOD

*Acer saccharinum*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Silver maple is brittle and shallow-rooted, frequent limb drop, surface roots, and short life.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Want fast shade without the storm cleanup? Thornless honeylocust or common hackberry.

No. 07

### Tower poplar

WEAK WOOD

*Populus x canescens 'Tower'*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Tower poplar is prone to many diseases and insects and short-lived.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Need a narrow upright? A KINDRED SPIRIT oak. For shade, hackberry or Kentucky coffeetree.

## INVASIVE OR AGGRESSIVELY SUCKERING

No. 08

### Black locust ('Purple Robe')

INVASIVE

*Robinia pseudoacacia*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Black locust suckers prolifically and is on Colorado's watch list as invasive in riparian corridors.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Kentucky coffeetree or common hackberry. Fine-textured shade that does not sucker into the lawn.

No. 09

### Callery / Bradford pear

INVASIVE

*Pyrus calleryana*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Callery pear is invasive in many regions and structurally weak, suckers, splits, and reseeds prolifically. Do not plant.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

Spring Snow crabapple (white spring flowers, no fruit) or Saskatoon serviceberry for the flowers; a hackberry or Accolade elm if you want the shade.

No. 10

## White poplar

*Populus alba*

INVASIVE

WHY IT FAILS HERE

White poplar suckers prolifically and is invasive, pulls up sidewalks, hard to remove.

PLANT INSTEAD

Bur oak or Kentucky coffeetree. Both stay put and outlive you.

## CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR THE PLANTS AROUND IT

No. 11

## Black walnut

*Juglans nigra*

JUGLONE

WHY IT FAILS HERE

Black walnut produces juglone, which inhibits many garden plants under its canopy; large messy nuts and limb drop are landscape liabilities. Do not plant in residential lots.

PLANT INSTEAD

Bur oak or Kentucky coffeetree. Big shade without poisoning the garden beneath it.

## DISEASE AND PEST PRONE

No. 12

## Bechtel crabapple

*Malus ioensis*

DISEASE

WHY IT FAILS HERE

Fireblight susceptibility, choose disease-resistant cultivars.

PLANT INSTEAD

A fireblight-resistant crabapple: Prairiefire, Royal Raindrops, or Adirondack.

No. 13

## Chinese elm

*Ulmus parvifolia*

DISEASE

WHY IT FAILS HERE

Susceptible to elm scale and other elm pests; reseeds in some Front Range areas.

PLANT INSTEAD

A named elm that actually holds up here: Accolade, Triumph, or 'Frontier'.

No. 14

## Golden Raindrops crabapple

*Malus x 'Schmidtcutleaf'*

DISEASE

WHY IT FAILS HERE

Fireblight susceptibility, choose disease-resistant cultivars.

PLANT INSTEAD

A fireblight-resistant crabapple: Prairiefire or Royal Raindrops.

## NOT PROVEN, OR MARGINAL, HERE

No. 15

### 'Emerald Sunshine' elm

UNPROVEN

*Ulmus propinqua*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Limited Front Range track record, performance varies.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

An elm with a real track record here: Accolade, Triumph, or a 'Princeton' American elm.

No. 16

### Japanese zelkova

UNPROVEN

*Zelkova serrata*

**WHY IT FAILS HERE**

Marginal cold hardiness for the Front Range, winter dieback and stress are common.

**PLANT INSTEAD**

An Accolade or Triumph elm gives the same vase shape and is hardy here. Or a common hackberry.

**None of this means a bare yard. Filter the trees that actually thrive in your conditions at coloradogardening.co, then save your shortlist and take it shopping.**

**SOURCE**

Not-Recommended ratings and each reason are from the 2024 CSU Front Range Tree Recommendation List. The swap picks are recommended trees that fit the same role; filter to your yard for the exact fit.