

SHADE AND ORNAMENTAL TREES FOR KERN COUNTY LANDSCAPES

University of California Cooperative Extension
Farm and Home Advisors
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A decorative graphic consisting of a wavy, horizontal band with a gradient from light yellow to dark blue, positioned above the University of California logo.

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This list is intended to be a guide. Plant availability may change and improved varieties may come to market. Quantitative data do not exist for plant water use for most and species.

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| Botanical Name | Common Name | Area ¹ | Mature Size ² | Rate of Growth ³ | Longevity ⁴ | BVOC Emissions ⁵ | Overall Rating ⁶ | Features | Faults |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <i>DECIDUOUS TREES</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Acer palmatum</i> | Japanese Maple | VP ,M | S | M | M | N | 3 | Fall Colors | Needs filtered light, not tolerant to heat or drought |
| <i>Acer saccharinum</i> | Silver Maple | V, M | L | F | M | N | 2 | Yellow fall color | Sunburn, chlorosis, brittle |
| <i>Aeculus californica</i> | California Buckeye | M | S | M | L | L | 1 | Native, interesting bark, white flowers | Very long dormancy |
| <i>Albizia julibrissin</i> | Mimosa | V, M, D | S | F | S | N | 2 | Foliage, flowers | Litter, sunburn, borer |
| <i>Alnus rhombifolia</i> | White Alder | V, M, R | M | F | S | N | 2 | Provides deep shade | Caterpillars, scale, borers, dieback |
| <i>Betula alba</i> | European Birch | V, M, R | S | M | S | N | 3 | Bark, pendulous growth habit | Borers, dieback, short life, not drought tolerant |
| <i>Betula nigra</i> | River Birch | V, M, R | S | M | M | N | 2 | Cinnamon bark | Limited to wet sites |
| <i>Carya illinoensis</i> | Pecan | V, M, D | L | M | L | L | 2 | Nuts | Aphids, zinc deficiency, nuts |
| <i>Catalpa speciosa</i> | Western Catalpa | V, M, D | M | F | M | L | 3 | Large leaves, flowers | Litter, dieback, chlorosis |
| <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | Common Hackberry | V, D | M | M | L | N | 3 | Bark | Difficult to establish |
| <i>Celtis sinensis</i> | Chinese Hackberry | V | M | M | L | U | 1 | No significant pests | Few |
| <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> | Buttonwillow | V, M, D | S | M | S | L | 1 | Flowers, dried flowers | Few |
| <i>Cercis canadensis</i> | Eastern Redbud | V, M | S | M | S-M | L | 1 | Buds and flowers | Pods |
| <i>Cercis occidentalis</i> | Western Redbud | V, M, R | S | M | S | L | 1 | Buds and flowers, CA native | Pods |
| <i>Cercis reniformis</i> 'Oklahoma' | Oklahoma Redbud | V, M, R | S | M | S | L | 1 | Improved variety | Pods |
| <i>Chilopsis linearis</i> | Desert Willow | V, M, D | S | M | M | L | 1 | Midsummer flowers | Litter, do not overwater 'Art's Seedless' has no pods |
| <i>Chionanthus retusus</i> | Chinese Fringe Tree | V, M | S | M | M | U | 1 | Spring flowers, small fruit, interesting structure | Few |
| <i>Chitalpa tashkentensis</i> | Chitalpa | V, D | S | F | S | U | 2 | Large flowers | Lots of litter, angular structure |
| <i>Cladrastis lutea</i> | Yellow Wood | V, M | L | S | L | U | 1 | Fragrant, tolerates alkaline soil | Slow growing |

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Area¹ | Mature Size² | Rate of Growth³ | Longevity⁴ | BVOC Emissions⁵ | Overall Rating⁶ | Features | Faults |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Cotinus coggygria | Smoke Tree | V, M, D | S | M | M | N | 1 | Fine-textured flowers | Few, purple variety also available |
| Diospyros kaki | Persimmon | V | M | S | M | N | 2 | Fruit, fall colors | Dual purpose—has fruit |
| Elaeagnus angustifolia | Russian Olive | V, M, D | S | M | M | N | 1 | Foliage, bark, extreme cold tolerance, well adapted to the desert | Can proliferate if favorable conditions |
| Fraxinus ‘Fan West’ | Fan West Ash | V, M, D | L | F | L | N | 1 | Seedless, resembles Modesto Ash, but much better variety | Difficult to establish central leader (all ash) |
| Fraxinus oxycarpa | Raywood Ash | V, M, D | M | F | M | N | 3 | Maroon fall color | Dieback reported in N. California, surface roots, maintenance |
| Fraxinus uhdei | Shamel Ash | V, M, D | L | F | L | N | 2 | Yellow fall color | Bentley ash moth, brittle |
| Fraxinus velutina | Arizona Ash | V, M, D | M | F | M | N | 2 | Yellow fall color | Anthracnose, Bentley ash moth, borers ‘Rio Grande’ desirable variety |
| Ginkgo biloba | Ginkgo | V, M, D | L | S | L | N | 1 | Growth habit, excellent fall color, drops leaves almost simultaneously | Use male tree to avoid odor, easily damaged by string trimmer |
| Gleditsia triacanthos inermis | Thornless Honey Locust | V, M, D | M | M | M | N | 1 | Fine- textured foliage | Litter, pod gall midge (some varieties) |
| Jacaranda acutifolia | Jacaranda | VP | M | F | M | N | 2 | Fine-textured foliage, flowers | Damaged by cold temps |
| Koelreuteria paniculata | Goldenrain Tree | V | S | S | L | L | 1 | Flowers, pods | Litter, slow growth |
| Lagerstroemia indica | Crape Myrtle | V | S | S-M | L | N | 1 | Summer flowers, fall colors | Honeydew from sharpshooter |
| Liquidamber styraciflua | Liquidamber, Sweetgum | V, M | L | M | L | H | 3 | Fall colors | Caterpillars in fall, use seedless variety to avoid fruit, disease causes dieback |
| Liriodendron tulipifera | Tulip Tree | V, M | M | S-M | M | L | 2 | Tulip-like flowers | Sunburn, not drought tolerant |
| Magnolia soulangiana | Saucer Magnolia | V, M | S | M | L | L | 1 | Large shrub or small tree, large spring flowers | Few |
| Malus ioensis | Crabapple | M | S | M | M | N | 2 | Spring flowers, fruit | Borers, sunburn, scab disease |
| Melia azedarach | Texas Umbrella Tree, Chinaberry | V, D | S-M | F | M | U | 1 | Tolerates poor soil | Brittle wood, litter, berries |
| Morus alba ‘Fruitless’ | Fruitless Mulberry | V, M, D | L | F | L | N | 1 | Tolerates heat and poor soil, tolerates pruning | Often pruned incorrectly |

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| <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> | Tupelo | V, M | M | S | L | L | 2 | Brilliant fall color | Messy fruit |
| <i>Paulownia tomentosa</i> | Empress Tree | V | L | F | S | U | 3 | Open structure, flowers | Will not produce furniture-quality wood under Kern conditions |
| <i>Persea thunbergii</i> | Japanese Bay | V | L | M-F | M | L | 1 | Good camphor substitute | Brittle, surface rooting |
| <i>Pistacia chinensis</i> | Chinese Pistache | V, M, D | M | S-M | L | M | 1 | Fall colors | Use male tree to avoid fruit, needs proper pruning when young |
| <i>Pistachia</i> ‘Red Push’ | Red Push Pistache | V, M, D | M | S-M | L | M | 1 | Fall colors, new leaves red turning green | Few |
| <i>Platanus acerifolia</i> | London Plane Tree | V, M, D, R | L | F | L | M | 1 | More uniform than <i>P. racemosa</i> , exfoliating bark | Anthracnose, mites, lacebugs, leaf litter |
| <i>Platanus racemosa</i> | California Sycamore | V, M, D, R | L | F | L | M | 2 | Exfoliating bark CA native | Anthracnose, mites, lacebugs, leaf litter, leaves brown mid-season |
| <i>Platanus x hispanica</i> ‘Bloodgood’ | London Plane Tree | V | L | F | L | M | 2 | Strong central leader | Can irritate breathing via tiny hairs |
| <i>Populus alba</i> | White Poplar | M, D | M | F | S | H | 2 | White undersides of leaves | Borers, invasive suckers, “cotton” |
| <i>Populus fremonti</i> | Fremont Cottonwood | M, D | L | F | M | H | 2 | CA native, drought tolerant | Borers, invasive suckers, “cotton,” very large at maturity |
| <i>Populus nigra italica</i> | Lombardy Poplar | M, D | M | F | S | H | 3 | Columnar shape | Borers, invasive suckers, trunk canker short life |
| <i>Prunus cerasifera</i> ‘Krauter Vesuvius’ | Purple-Leaf Plum | V, M, D | S | M | M | N | 3 | Purple foliage | Borers, fruit drop, disease and dieback |
| <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> | Evergreen Pear | V, M, D | M | M | M | N | 2 | Early flowers, fall color | Fireblight |
| P.c. ‘Bradford’ | Bradford Pear | V, M, D | M | F | M | N | 2 | Early flowers, fall color | Fireblight, tight structure |
| P.c. ‘Aristocrat’ | Aristocrat Pear | V, M, D | L | F | M | N | 3 | Early flowers, fall color | Fireblight (do not use north of Kern Co.) |
| <i>Pyrus kawakamii</i> | Evergreen Pear | V, M, D | S-M | M | M | N | 1 | Flowers, growth habit, less susceptible to fireblight | As wide as tall |
| <i>Quercus coccinea</i> | Scarlet Oak | V, M | M | M | L | H | 2 | Fall color | Chlorosis |
| <i>Quercus douglasii</i> | Blue Oak | V, M | M | S | L | H | 2 | CA native, not usually planted | Root rot |
| <i>Quercus fusiformis</i> | Escarpment Live Oak | V | M | M | L | H | 1 | Prefers alkaline soils | Hard to find |

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| Quercus lobata | Valley Oak | V, M | L | F | L | H | 1 | CA native, tolerates irrigation, very drought tolerant | Few, very large at maturity |
| Quercus palustris | Pin Oak | V, M | M | F | L | H | 2 | Fall color | Chlorosis |
| Quercus robur | English Oak | V | M | M | L | H | 1 | Growth form | Few |
| Quercus rubra | Red Oak | V, M | M | M | L | H | 2 | Fall color | Chlorosis |
| Robinia ambigua | Idaho Locust | V, D | M | F | M | M | 2 | Flowers, drought tolerant | Aggressive roots, thorns |
| Robinia pseudoacacia | Black Locust | V, M, D | M | F | M | M | 2 | Survives with no water longer than most | Thorns |
| Sapium sebiferum | Chinese Tallow Tree | V, M, D | M | F | M | N | 1 | Brilliant fall color | Litter, small cream-colored berries |
| Styphnolobium japonica | Japanese Pagoda Tree | V, M | L | M | L | H | 1 | Very interesting form | Hard to find; flowers, seeds stain concrete |
| Ulmus parvifolia | Chinese Elm | V, D | L | F | M | N | 1 | Bark | Occasional unknown vascular wilt, seeds |
| Ulmus pumila | Siberian Elm | V, M, D | L | F | M | N | 2 | Tolerates heat, cold, poor soil | Elm leaf beetle, seeds |
| Vitex agnus-castus | Chaste-Tree | V, M, D | S | M | L | N | 1 | Summer flowers | Litter of flowers, twiggy growth |
| Zelkova serrata | Sawleaf Zelkova | V, M, D | L | M | L | N | 1 | Fall colors, elm-like appearance | Spider mites |
| Zizyphus jujube | Jujube, Chinese Date | V, M, D | S | M | L | N | 1 | Zigzag branches, edible fruit | Litter of fruit |
| <i>BROAD-LEAVED EVERGREEN TREES</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Acacia baileyana | Bailey's Acacia | V | S | F | S | L | 2 | Feathery foliage, is purple variety | Highly allergenic |
| Acacia stenophylla | Shoestring Acacia | V | S | F | S | L | 2 | Very open, resembles shoestrings dangling in the wind | Flowers litter, but easy to cleanup |
| Araucaria araucana | Monkey-Puzzle | V | L | M | L | U | 3 | Unusual foliage and form | Large fruit that can fall and cause injury |
| Araucaria bidwilli | Bunya-Bunya | V | L | M | L | U | 3 | Unusual foliage and form | Scale |
| Arbutus 'Marina' | Strawberry Tree | V | L | S | L | U | 1 | Red bark, fruit | Slow growth |
| Arbutus unedo | Strawberry Tree | V | S | S | L | N | 1 | Flowers, fruit, red bark, | Slow growth |

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| Brachychiton populneus | Bottle Tree | V | M | S-M | M | L | 2 | Trunk shape | Brittle wood, litter, sensitive to cold |
| Callistemon viminalis | Weeping Bottlebrush | V | S | S | M | M | 1 | Flowers, pendulous shape | Litter |
| Ceratonia siliqua | Carob, St. John's Bread | V | M | M | L | M | 1 | Compound leaves, fruit | Litter of pods (female trees) |
| Cinnamomum camphora | Camphor Tree | V | M | S | L | N | 2 | Form | Chlorosis |
| Citrus auratifolia 'Bearss' | Bearss Lime | VP | S | M | L | M | 2 | Fruit | Scale, root rot, sensitive to cold |
| Citrus limon | Lemon | VP | S-M | M | L | M | 2 | Fruit, check varietal adaptability | Scale, root rot, insects |
| Citrus reticulata | Mandarin | VP | S-M | M | L | M | 2 | Fruit, check varietal adaptability | Scale, root rot, insects |
| Citrus paradisi | Grapefruit | VP | M | M | L | M | 2 | Fruit, check varietal adaptability | Scale, root rot, insects |
| Citrus sinensis | Orange | VP | M | M | L | M | 2 | Fruit, check varietal adaptability | Scale, root rot, insects |
| Elaeocarpus decipiens | Japanese Blueberry Tree | V | M | M | M | U | 2 | Tall but narrow, oldest leaves turn red and fall, blooms summer | Few |
| Eriobotrya dyslexa | Bronze Loquat | V | S-M | M | M | N | 1 | Fruitless, large shrub | Some fireblight susceptibility, litter |
| Eriobotrya japonica | Loquat | V | S-M | M | M | N | 2 | Fruit | Some fireblight susceptibility, litter |
| Eucalyptus (many species) | Eucalyptus | V, D | M-L | F | L | H | 2 | Very fast growth, firewood, drought tolerant | Litter, borers, brittle, large size, can be unstable |
| Geijera parviflora | Australian Willow | V | M | F | M | L | 2 | Low litter, low maintenance | Touchy with cold |
| Grevillea robusta | Silk Oak | V | L | F | M | L | 2 | Foliage, orange flowers | Lots of litter, brittle wood, large size |
| Laurus nobilis | Bay Laurel, Sweet Bay | V | L | M | L | L | 1 | Source of bay leaf 'Saratoga' more tree-like | Aphids, can sucker |
| Ligustrum lucidum | Japanese Privet | V, M, D | S-M | F | L | N | 1 | Foliage, flowers | Few, usually grown as a shrub |
| Magnolia grandifolia | Magnolia | V | M-L | M | M | L-M | 2 | Foliage, flowers | Root rot, decline, seed pads |
| Parkinsonia aculeata | Mexican Palo Verde | VP, DP | S | M | M | L | 3 | Flowers, green bark | Litter of pods and flowers |

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| Parkinsonia 'Desert Museum' | Desert Museum Palo Verde | V | S | F | M | L | 2 | Green bark, yellow flowers | May be injured by cold, do not overwater |
| Parkinsonia florida | Blue Palo Verde | V | S | F | M | L | 2 | Green bark, yellow flowers | May be injured by cold, do not overwater |
| Podocarpus gracilior | Fern Pine | V | L | M | L | L | 1 | Durable, prune as you like | Leaves similar to needles |
| Prosopis chilensis | Chilean Mesquite | V | S | F | L | L | 1 | Drought tolerant | Allergenic |
| Prosopis glandulosa torreyana | Honey Mesquite | V | S | F | L | L | 1 | Drought tolerant | Thorns, allergenic |
| Quercus agrifolia | Coast Live Oak | V | L | M | M | H | 3 | CA Native | Leaf galls, root rot, decline |
| Quillaja saponaria | Soapbark Tree | V | M | M | M | U | 2 | Look of Q agrifolia | Hard to find |
| Quercus ilex | Holly Oak | V | M | M | L | H | 1 | Foliage | Few |
| Quercus suber | Cork Oak | V | M-L | M | L | N | 1 | Cork bark | Few |
| Quercus virginiana | Southern Live Oak | V | M | M | L | H | 1 | Form, possible in lawns | Few |
| Quercus wislizenii | Interior Live Oak | V, M | L | S | L | H | 1 | CA native, not usually planted | Few |
| Rhus lancea | African Sumac | V | S-M | M | L | L | 1 | As broad as tall, brown bark, good olive substitute, can be multitrunk | Difficult to prune |
| Schinus terebinthifolius | Brazilian Pepper | V, D | S | M | M | L | 3 | Wider than tall | Cold sensitive |
| Schinus molle | Peruvian Pepper California Pepper | V | M | F | M | L | 2 | Weeping form | Brittle |
| <i>NEEDLE EVERGREEN TREES</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Abies concolor | White Fir | M>6000 ft. | L | S-M | L | L | 3 | Pyramidal shape | Few where naturally growing |
| Casuarina cunninghamiana | Beefwood, She-oak | V, D | M | F | L | U | 2 | Windbreak plant, drought | Suckers from roots |
| Cedrus atlantica | Atlas Cedar | V, M | L | S-M | L | L | 1 | Growth form | Few |
| Cedrus deodara | Deodar Cedar | V, M, D | L | F | L | L | 1 | Growth form | Needle drop |
| Cedrus libani | Cedar of Lebanon | V, M | L | S-M | L | L | 2 | Growth form | Few |
| Cupressocyparis leylandii | Leyland Cypress | V, M, D | S | F | S | L | 3 | Pyramidal screen | Disease will kill at 10-15 years |

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| Cupressus arizonica | Arizona Cypress | V, M, D | S | F | M | L | 2 | Bark, bluish foliage, drought tolerant | Dieback under stress |
| Cupressus sempervirens | Italian Cypress | V, M, D | M | M | M | L | 2 | Columnar shape | Some dieback |
| Calocedrus decurrens | Incense Cedar | V, M | M | M | L | U | 2 | Fragrant wood | Shorter life in V or D |
| Picea pungens | Colorado Spruce | M>5000 ft. | M | S-M | M | L-M | 3 | Shape, color | Canker at low elevations |
| Pinus canariensis | Canary Island Pine | V | L | F | M | L | 1 | Shape | Needle litter |
| Pinus eldarica | Mondell Pine, Eldarica Pine, Afghan Pine | V, D | M | F | M | M | 2 | Tolerates heat and drought | Dieback |
| Pinus halepensis | Aleppo Pine | V, D | M-L | F | L | L | 1 | Tolerates heat and drought | Few |
| Pinus nigra | Austrian Pine | M>4000 ft. | M | S | M | L | 1 | Dense, full foliage | Few in proper site |
| Pinus pinea | Italian Stone Pine | V | M-L | S | L | L | 1 | Round shape | Few |
| Pinus sylvestris | Scots Pine | M>4000 ft. | L | M | L | L | 2 | Yellow-orange bark | Few |
| Pinus thunbergii | Japanese Black Pine | V | S | S | M | L | 3 | Angular growth | Borers, sunburn |
| Sequoiadendron giganteum | Giant Sequoia | M>6000 ft. | L | M | S | N | 3 | Size | Not well adapted |
| Sequoia sempervirens | Coast Redwood | M only | L | F | S-L | N | 3 | Size, shape | Not adapted to Valley conditions despite being widely planted. Browning of foliage is common. |
| Tamarix aphylla | Athel Tree | V, D | L | F | M | N | 3 | Windbreak, very drought tolerant | Very invasive, not for urban areas |
| Tamarix parvifolia | Tamarisk | V, M | S-M | M | M | N | 2 | Screen, very drought tolerant | Invasive with irrigation |
| Platycladus orientalis | Chinese Arborvitae | V, M, D | M | S-M | L | L | 1 | Screen | Scale, sooty mold |
| <i>PALMS</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Chamaerops humilis | Mediterranean Fan Palm | V | S | M | M | U | 1 | Multi-trunk form, limited root system (all palms) | Few |
| Phoenix canariensis | Canary Island Date Palm | V | M | F | M-L | L-M | 1 | Form, large fronds | Damaged by cold temps |
| Syagrus romanzoffianum | Queen Palm | V | S-M | M | M | L-M | 1 | Trunk, leaves | Yellow fronds after a cool winter |
| Trachycarpus fortunei | Windmill Palm | V | S | M | L | U | 1 | Trunk | Few |

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| Washingtonia filifera | California Fan Palm | V | L | F | L | L-M | 1 | Fan leaves, CA native, thick trunk | Dead leaves can harbor rodents |
| Washingtonia robusta | Mexican Fan Palm | V | L | F | L | L-M | 1 | Fan leaves, narrow trunk | Dead leaves can harbor rodents |

¹Geographic areas where tree is adapted: V = Valley, M = Mountain, D = Desert, R = Riparian
 VP = Valley, Protected/Warm Winter Locations (e.g. Bakersfield College Area)
 DP = Desert, Protected Locations

²Mature Size: L = Large ~ > 50 ft., M = Medium ~ 20-50 ft., S = Small ~ < 20 ft.

³Rate of Growth: F = Fast, M = Medium, S = Slow
 Growth rates are relative and assume plants are irrigated.
 In general, deciduous trees grow faster than needle evergreens or palms.

⁴Longevity: L = Long ~ > 30 yr, M = Medium ~ 15-30 yr, S = Short ~ < 15 yr
 In general, tree lifespan tends to be shorter in Kern County than what would be expected in the northern and eastern U.S., both for individual species and the urban forest as a whole.

⁵BVOC emissions contribute to photochemical smog.
 N = Negligible, L = Low, M = Medium, H = High, U = Unknown

⁶Rating: General adaptability to irrigated conditions in the geographic areas indicated for planting. Varietal differences may be important.
 1 = Well-adapted 2 = Plant after consideration 3 = Serious limitations; plant with caution