

TABLE 4-2. The Thirty Most Valuable Plants for Urban and Suburban Yards

Common Name	Botanical Name	Hardy to USDA Zone ^A	Growth Habit	Light ^B	Edible Part or Use ^C	Animal Use ^D	Other Uses ^E	Notes
Chestnut, American, sweet, or Chinese	<i>Castanea</i> spp.	5	Large decid. tree	○	Sd, Med	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Wbr, Hr, Wd	In blight areas, use Chinese chestnut.
Italian or other stone pine	<i>Pinus pinea</i>	4	Large evergreen tree	○	Sd	Hab, For	Wbr, Hr, Wd	Many other species have edible seeds.
Black locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	3	Large decid. tree	○	Fl, Sd	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Wbr, Hr, Wd	Nitrogen-fixer, may sucker aggressively
Honey locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	3	Large decid. tree	○	Seedpod	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Erosion control	
Apple, multigrafted	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	3	Small decid. tree	○	Fr	Ins, Hab, For	Hr	Late and early varieties for eating, storage, and cider can be grafted on one tree.
Stone fruit tree, multigrafted	<i>Prunus</i> spp.	3–6	Small decid. tree	○	Fr	Ins, Hab, For	Hr	Hardiness depends on what fruit is grafted.
Medlar	<i>Mespilus germanica</i>	6	Small decid. tree	○	Fr	Hab		Fruits in late fall
Bamboo	<i>Bambusa</i> , <i>Fargesia</i> , <i>Phyllostachys</i> , <i>Sasa</i>	5–9	Evergreen shrub	○	Sht	Hab, For	Wbr, Hr, Poles, Fbr	Hardiness, size, and spreading depends on genus.
Buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	2	Decid. shrub	○	Fr	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Wbr, Hr, Dye, N-fixer	Drought resistant
Currant, red	<i>Ribes rubrum</i>	5	Decid. shrub	○●	Fr, Fl	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Hr	Easy to propagate
Gooseberry	<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>	5	Decid. shrub	○◐	Fr	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Hr	
Goumi	<i>Elaeagnus multiflora</i>	6	Decid. shrub	○	Fr	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Wbr, Hr, N-fixer	Tolerates air pollution
Hazelnut	<i>Corylus</i> spp.	4	Decid. shrub	○◐	Sd, Oil	Hab, For	Wbr, Hr, Bskt	
Purple osier	<i>Salix purpurea</i>	5	Decid. shrub	○	Med	Hab	Wbr, Hr, Bskt	
Raspberry, red	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	3	Decid. shrub	○◐	Fr	Ins, Hab, Chk, For	Hr	
Siberian pea shrub	<i>Caragana arborescens</i>	3	Evergreen shrub	○	Sd	Ins, Chk, For	Wbr, Hr, Dye, Soil stab, N-fixer	
American licorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza lepidota</i>	3	Peren.	○◐	Root, Med		N-fixer	Can be opportunistic
Cardoon	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	5	Bienn.	○	Fr	Ins	Mulch	
Comfrey	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	5	Peren.	○◐	Lf, Med	Ins, Chk	Nutr, Biom	Spreads easily by root division
Daylily	<i>Heemerocallis fulva</i>	4	Peren.	○◐	Fl, Lf, Root	Hum	Fbr	
Egyptian or walking onion	<i>Allium cepa proliferum</i>	5	Peren.	○	Fl, Lf, Root, Top Bulbs	Ins	Nutr, Dye, RplInt	
Groundnut	<i>Apios americana</i>	3	Peren.	○◐	Sd, Root		N-fixer	
Kale, perennial	<i>Brassica oleracea ramosa</i>	7	Short-lived Peren.	○◐	Lf			Strong flavor that becomes mild when cooked
Maximilian sunflower	<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	4	Peren.	○	Root, Sht	Ins		Deer resistant
Oca	<i>Oxalis tuberosa</i>	7	Peren.	○◐	Fl, Lf, Root			Can be grown as annual in colder zones; tubers store well
Russian sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	6	Peren.	○	Lf	Ins, Hum	Wbr, Hr	
Sweet cicely	<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	5	Peren.	◐●	Lf, Sd, Root	Ins	Plsh	
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	2	Peren.	○	Lf, Tea, Med	Ins	Nutr, Dye	
Grape	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	6	Decid. vine	○	Fr, Lf	Hab, Food	Dye	
Kiwifruit	<i>Actinidia arguta</i> , <i>A. deliciosa</i> , <i>A. kolomikta</i>	4–7	Decid. vine	○	Fr	Hab, Food		<i>A. arguta</i> is spread aggressively by birds in areas with summer rain.

^A The USDA hardiness zone system represents the lowest temperature a plant will normally survive:

Zone	Minimum Temp (°F)
2	−50 to −40°
3	−40 to −30°
4	−30 to −20°
5	−20 to −10°
6	−10 to 0°
7	0 to 10°
8	10 to 20°
9	20 to 30°

^B Light:

- - Prefers full sun
- - Prefers shade
- ◐ - Tolerates partial shade

^C Edible Part or Use:

- Fr - Fruit
- Fl - Flower
- Lf - Leaf
- Med - Medicinal
- Sd - Seed
- Sht - Shoot

^D Animal Use:

- Chk - Poultry forage
- For - Forage, browse, or other animal feed
- Hab - Provides habitat
- Hum - Attracts hummingbirds
- Ins - Attracts beneficial insects

^E Other Uses

- Biom - Plant produces large quantities of biomass
- Bskt - Stem, branches, or root used for basketry
- Dye - Some or all of plant used to prepare dye
- Fbr - Leaf, stem, flower parts, or root used in paper, cordage, or other fiber product
- Hr - Hedgerow species
- Wd - Woody parts used for lumber, firewood, or craft wood
- N-fixer - Nitrogen-fixing species
- Nutr - Nutrient accumulator species
- Poles - Stem or branches used for poles and support stakes.
- Plsh - Used as furniture polish
- RplInt - Used as insect repellent
- Soap - Leaves, sap, fruit, or other part used as soap
- Soil stab - Used for soil stabilization
- Wbr - Windbreak species