

# The Tree Lover's Guide to Native Kentucky Trees

## Why Native Trees Matter

Native trees are the heart and soul of Kentucky's ecosystem. They're not just beautiful—they're built to thrive in our soil, resist local pests, and support pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

By planting native, you're doing more than landscaping. You're giving back to the land that raised you.



## What's Inside

- A look at 10 incredible native trees in Kentucky
- Fun facts + how to identify them
- Tips for planting and long-term care
- Bonus: What to avoid (invasive species)



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## Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Fun Fact: Kentucky's state tree!

What Makes It Special: Tall, fast-growing, with stunning yellow tulip-shaped flowers

Where to Plant: Backyards or open lawns – needs space to grow

Care Tip: Prune early in life for strong central structure



## Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

Fun Fact: The sap can be used to make syrup

What Makes It Special: Flaming red and gold fall color

Where to Plant: Partial shade to full sun

Care Tip: Keep roots cool with mulch and steady moisture



## Kentucky Coffee Tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*)

Fun Fact: Seeds were once roasted as a coffee substitute

What Makes It Special: Unique bark and open crown – great urban tree

Where to Plant: Open space with sunlight

Care Tip: Protect young trees from harsh winters with wrapping



## Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Fun Fact: Early spring pink blossoms attract pollinators

What Makes It Special: Compact size and stunning seasonal display

Where to Plant: Perfect for front yards and small gardens

Care Tip: Don't over-prune – let it show off its natural shape



## American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*)

Fun Fact: Has camouflage-style bark and grows huge

What Makes It Special: Great for shade and streambanks

Where to Plant: Moist, low-lying areas

Care Tip: Needs room – don't plant too close to your house!

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## What NOT to Plant in Louisville

Avoid these invasive or problematic trees:

- Bradford Pear
- Tree of Heaven
- Mimosa
- Autumn Olive

Why? They may grow fast, but they:

- Invade native species
- Break easily in storms
- Attract pests
- Require constant pruning

Better Alternatives: Replace with Redbud, Serviceberry, or Tulip Poplar.

## Planting Tips & Seasonal Care

Best Time to Plant:

- Fall is ideal - cool temps and rain help roots establish.
- Spring is second-best - just avoid extreme summer heat.

### Quick Tips:

- Dig a hole twice as wide as the root ball
- Avoid planting too deep
- Mulch (but keep away from the trunk!)
- Water weekly during the first year

## Need Help? Let's Talk Trees.

New Leaf Tree Service - Louisville, KY  
Certified Arborists. Native Tree Experts.

**Tree selection + planting | Pruning + structural shaping | Storm protection**  
**Tree health consultations**

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