Norm Schilling's List of Wonderful Trees on the Cheap and Easy

There are some wonderful plants that are very easy to propagate. Some are easy to start cuttings and others will not take plants that can be propagated from seed. Some plants can be divided and others will not take plants that can be propagated from cuttings. Some plants can be divided or layered, and others will not. Some are poisonous to pets and others are not.

There are many wonderful plants that are very easy to propagate. Some are easy to start from cuttings and others will not take plants that can be propagated from seed or divisions. Some plants can be divided into many, and others send out seed, resulting in babies everywhere. Some are poisonous to pets and others are not. Some are invasive, meaning that which talk about such plants, or are so terribly informational that the descriptions the characteristics of the plants talked about, are a little extra. I hope you find it helpful, and will be getting my list of wonderful trees for the cheap and easy to you soon.

This is the list of the non-trees. It's the writing the shade trees list soon. And by the way, while I do not know why the shade trees information could think of, and think all the botanical names are spelled right, there is the chance that there are a few angle errors. If there are, I hope you'll understand.

Sun Lovers
Flowering Perennials and Annuals

Shrubby Dogwood (Syncrotia pentachaetia)

- Prefers half shady, and grows very slowly, usually within 10 ft.
- 1 plant will produce about 10 ft.long plant
- 6 to 10 inches around, but it is slow to grow.
- Produces small golden daisy like flowers for most or all of the year.
- Very drought tolerant.
- These plants look half way nice in the winter, and will likely grow right back in spring.
- Foliage is fine and delicate, and has a wonderful, interesting smell when crushed or brushed against. Very pleasant smell.
- Low water use, seems to grow bigger and fuller with some water.
- Likes desert soils (actually a native species)
- Seems to be a short lived shrub, but I have had one for a few years ago, which has since died, but I now have Bill from it reseeding itself. I didn't do any of the work.

Zauschneria (Conopsis sp.)

- Reseeds itself easily, but is not invasive.
- Grows to approx. 1 foot wide by 1 foot tall
- Bright yellow daisy like flowers about 1½ to 2 inches wide.
- Very drought tolerant.
- Cut back spent flower stalks carefully into the foliage, to make them disappear, but leave some unpruned for reseeding.
- Likes desert soils (actually a native species in California plantations) growing at base, in winter. Not picky about soils, and is a low water user.

Beardtongues (Penstemon spp.)

- Many different species exist.
- Many are natural hunting hosts leaders.
- Come in a wide variety of colors, from blues through reds, offset bone on spikes.
- Most are very drought tolerant, and reseed themselves easily.
- Cut spent flowers back to rosettes after seed has matured and dispersed.
- A very few groups of plants to pick.
- Some are short lived, but if they like their growing conditions, but the species listed here are generally tolerant of our soils and sun. Some of the more tender species of Penstemon can be a bit fussy about irrigation, and will not take well to drying out too much.
- Penstemon species has greenish-gray foliage that turns partially purple in cold weather, with red reddish flower spikes in spring that fixed hummingbirds, and reseeds itself prolifically, meaning creates groups of plants.
- P. eatonii (Firecracker Penstemon), P. ambiguus, P. strictus (Rocky Mountain Penstemon) and P. palmeri (Nugget), as well as other species, also performed well here.

Santa Barbara Daisy (Erigeron karvinskianus)

- A spreading sub-shrub that reaches a foot and about 2 foot high, or more.
- A mound of small dainty daisy like flower that change from reddish pink to white as they age.
- Will reseed itself successively, as my original one plant has now grown the about 6 of spring, after about 3 years.

I'm not sure on maintenance, but I think it can be pruned back hard, and size controlled, in the fall, or early in the bottom below one that is about 6 months, after I can know back, and see how it reseeds.

- Low to moderate water use, and loves our sun and soil.

Cassia sp.

- Comes in a variety of colors from yellow through orange, red to purple.
- 2 basic types, clumping and spreading. Clumping types reach about 1 to 2 feet around, and 1 foot tall, and spreaders reach about 3 feet around and 2 feet tall, or more wide, it is more feet around, but can be back on the edges to control size.
- Cut back spent flower stalks to the foliage, to make them disappear, but leave some unpruned for reseeding.
- Very drought tolerant (and very sun and plantation) growing at base, in winter.
- Not picky about soils, and is a low water user.

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**Beardtongues (Penstemon spp.

If you're contemplating planting trees in your yard, whether from seed or from the nursery, I would encourage you to make a trip to the Desert Demonstration Garden, where you can observe some relatively mature specimens of all the trees I'm writing about here. They have many different varieties of the Mesquites, Acacias, and Palo Verdes, as well as an almond, a Lacebark Elm, and a couple of Chinese Pistaches. Not only that, but the staff is friendly and very helpful, and the garden is beautiful.

And please, don't top your trees!

Mesquites

- A number of different species and varieties exist. They vary from the relatively small native Screwbean Mesquite, to species that get much larger. Typically quite thorny.
- Flowers are catkins, which look similar to a fuzzy yellow caterpillar, and can be quite nicely fragrant.
- Beautiful trees with feathery foliage and interesting bark texture that varies from species to species. Form also varies with species, from the weeping effect of the Texas Honey Mesquite to the erect and angular nature of the Screwbean.
- Mesquites are true desert trees, and thrive best with very infrequent watering. Too much water, and they grow very quickly. While this might seem like a good thing, there are many disadvantages that come as a result... They often develop "weak crotches" which will later cause the branch to rip off the tree with a resulting enormous wound. They also don't develop as sound a root system under wet conditions. Their beautiful natural form is distorted by the development of very long whip-like branches, and they grow fast and die young. Do not attempt to grow Mesquites in, or right next to, a lawn.
- The cold hardiness of the species varies, with the North American varieties being more cold tolerant than their South American cousins. The cold hardiness of individual trees can be increased if they are allowed to go dry going into and through the winter. I try not to water my desert trees at all in the late fall and winter, and simply accept whatever rainfall they get.
- Does not require fertilization, and does well in poor desert soils.

Acacias

- A large group desert trees and shrubs typically characterized by finely textured foliage, thorns, and yellow puffball-like flowers that can be wonderfully fragrant.
- Size of mature plant can vary greatly, depending on the species.
- Cold hardiness varies from species to species.
- A true desert plant group that thrives on poor soils and infrequent watering (see Mesquites, above).
- Typically needs little or no fertilization.

Palo Verde

- Actually 2 different groups of trees, Parkinsonia and Cercidium.
- Green trunks and branches characterize both genuses, from which they get their common name, which means "green wood" in Spanish.
- Flowers are yellow, and the trees can put on an incredible flower show in the spring, especially the Blue Palo Verde (Cercidium floridum).
- Foothill Palo Verde (Cercidium microphyllum) is the smallest, reaching a mature size of only 15 to 20 feet, and not as wide.
- Mexican Palo Verde reaches 30 feet in height and width, and has a longer bloom period, but is quite messy, producing lots of leaf and seed litter. It produces a nicely filtered shade beneath, for the canopy is not real dense.
- All like desert soils, infrequent watering, and little or no fertilization.

Chinese Pistache (Pistache chinensis)

- A large and picturesque deciduous tree. Deciduous means that it drops all of its leaves in winter.
- Moderate growth rate, eventually reaching a size of thirty to fifty feet in height and almost as much in width.
- Produces a beautiful fall leaf show, with the tree turning crimson and purple.
- Because of its size and deciduous nature, it is an excellent choice for areas to the south or west of the house, for it lets the sun shine through in cold weather and shades wonderfully in warm. This not only results in savings through reduced air conditioner use, but also makes the yard cooler in summer.
- Because of its eventual size, roots can become quite large, and should be kept at a minimum distance of 5 to 10 feet from foundations, walkways and other hardscapes.
- Flowers are visually insignificant. Seeds are borne in small fruits that turn from red to black as they mature.
- Moderate water use, needing more frequent irrigation than the desert trees.
- Can be used in lawns. If you do plant one in a lawn, whether from seed or nursery, remove the turf from around it a minimum of one to two feet on each side of the trunk, the more the better. Studies have shown that such turf removal greatly increases the health and growth rate of trees. It also prevents accidental line trimmer or mower damage.

Almond

- Almonds thrive here. They are beautiful, dark wooded, deciduous trees with lance shaped leaves three or four inches long.
- Moderate growth rate, eventually reaching a size of twenty to thirty feet in height and width.
- Almonds give a fantastic early spring flower show, when the tree becomes almost covered in white, 5-petaled blossoms, tinged to red in the center. Each blossom is mildly fragrant, and when many thousands of blooms are open, the air is filled with wafts of wonderful fragrance.
- Produces fruit that looks like a peach when young, but later hardens, dries and then splits open when ready to harvest. Trees can produce great quantities of nuts.
- Tolerates most soils, but they don't like poor drainage. They appreciate organic amendment of soils, and organic mulch.
- Cold hearty, and moderate water use.
- I have 3 mature specimens in my yard, and they are very dear to me. I love the flower show, and harvest lots of nuts every year. There are plenty left over, and the ground squirrels that live in the cactus garden love them. I have many seedlings pop up each year, and have removed them all but one. It grew in the cactus garden, and though I have given it extra water, it has still shown great drought tolerance. Because it is a wild seedling, I don't know if it will produce fruit, for they need to be planted with a different variety to do so, or be of a self-pollinating variety. Because I don't know the lineage of the parent trees, I'm not sure what will happen with the offspring. For that reason, I actually wouldn't recommend an almond from seed in most cases. A well-selected nursery tree would suit most needs better.

Lacebark Elm (Ulmus parvifolia)

- Lacebark Elm is a semi-evergreen tree that can reach 40 feet in height and 50 in width.
- The tree gets its name from the nature of the bark to peel of in irregular patches as it matures. The resulting mottling effect can be very attractive, with very subtle shades of purples and greens showing.
- Leaves are small, and the flowers insignificant. The tree has a nice, fairly open form, making it a great shade tree.
- Tolerant of desert soils, but benefits from organic soils and mulch, and fertilization.
- Moderate water use and growth rate, and cold hardy.
- Trees can be fairly messy, and produce lots of seed. Seeds germinate readily, making this a good tree for intentionally starting from seed.

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