Top Five Small Trees for Robeson County

The leaves are starting to change, the grass is headed into dormancy, and the nights are getting cooler. It is finally fall, so let’s get planting!

Small trees are a great way to add visual and aesthetic beauty to your landscape without taking up a lot of room. Here in North Carolina we have quite a few great trees that we can choose from. Without further ado, here are my top five small trees for Robeson County:

1. Redbud, Latin name - *Cercis Canadensis*, Grows well from Zones 5-9
   Redbud trees are well known for their outstanding spring blooms in pink or white. It does well in full sun, or part shade. It has a unique branching habit almost appearing to zigzag up the trunk that provide great winter structure interest. ‘Forest Pansy’ has beautiful purple foliage the turns dark green in the late summer.

2. Crepe Myrtle, Latin name - *Lagerstroemia indica*, Grows well from Zones 7-9
   Pink, red, purple or white flowers bloom for 3 long months into the fall making this one of the longest most impressive southern trees. Crape myrtles can range in size from 6 to 25 feet or higher, so make sure you select the right plant for the right location. Some varieties offer red, yellow, or orange foliage in the fall along with exfoliating bark in the winter for year round beauty. ‘Natchez’ is a drought tolerant, disease resistant variety with beautiful white flowers and cinnamon peeling bark. Do not forget that crape myrtles do not need to be pruned every year. They will bloom for 3 months no matter what.

3. Flowering Dogwood, Latin name – *Cornus florida*, rows well from Zones 5-8
   Native to this area, the flowering dogwood has a showy display of pink or white flowers in the spring and bright red fruits in the fall. This is considered to be an understory tree, and will do well in partial shade. Flowering dogwoods are typically from 10 to 25 feet tall and wide, but each variety is different.

4. Japanese Maple, Latin name – *Acer palmatum*, Grows well from Zones 6-8
   There are so many varieties and sizes that the possibilities with Japanese maples are endless. Ranging in size from 6 to 25 feet, these maples are most commonly used as
specimen plants because of their cost. ‘Bloodgood’ has beautiful burgundy foliage that turns dark red in the fall. ‘Coral Bark’ has a reddish tint to the bark of newer growth and provides color long after the leaves have fallen. Most Japanese maples prefer partial shade, but with proper care and attention can be planted in full sun.

5. Crabapple, Latin name – *Malus* spp., Grows well from Zones 3-8
Not only does this small tree provide a gorgeous burst of flowers in the spring that come in whites, pinks, and reds, but it provides autumn interest with colorful fruits and leaves. Many selections have great disease resistance, and can be a mainstay in the landscape for many years. Make sure to do your research on the growth habit of the particular variety you purchase. Crabapples can grow from 6 to 30 feet in width and height!

Small trees are a great addition to any landscape, adding color and interest without taking too much space. Before you run out and buy your small trees, make sure you do your research on varieties first. Know where you are planting it, and select for the plants mature size. Fall is the perfect time to plant those small trees, so after you have done your research, head over to one of our local nurseries and purchase your favorite!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns feel free to contact me, Kerrie Roach, horticultural Extension agent, at North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, by E-mail at Kerrie_Roach@ncsu.edu or call me at 910-671-3276. To learn more about Extension visit North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center’s website at Robeson.ces.ncsu.edu.