A FEW TREES TO REPLACE ASH

The following list is recommended for homeowners seeking replacement options for ash trees. Beware that no tree is a perfect replacement and some species have specific site limitations. For a more thorough and informative list, please visit plantnebraska.org or nfs.unl.edu/ash-replacements.

1. **Bur Oak - and related species (Quercus macrocarpa):** Bur oak is an outstanding, majestic native tree with amazing drought tolerance; great for wildlife; 50-70’ x 50-75’. Related oaks include Chinkapin Oak (Q. muehlenbergii), Swamp White Oak (Q. bicolor - limit to eastern Nebraska), and Gambel Oak (Q. gambelii) a species well-suited to western Nebraska.

2. **Red Oak - and related species (Quercus rubra):** Red oaks are less tolerant of high pH soils and are generally more suited to eastern Nebraska; closely related species include Red Oak, Shumard Oak, Black Oak, Buckley Oak, and Shingle Oak; most species tough and reliable with lustrous sharp-pointed leaves and beautiful fall color from russet to bright red in fall; 40-60’ x 40-60’.

3. **American Linden - and related species (Tilia americana):** American linden is a tough and adaptable native with fragrant spring flowers favored by bees and other pollinators; 60’ x 40’. Littleleaf linden (Tilia cordata) is similar but with a more formal, pyramidal shape. Silver linden (Tilia tomentosa) has very attractive dark-green leaves with pubescent (silvery) undersides that give them better resistance to Japanese beetles.

4. **Coffeee tree (Gymnocladus dioicus):** Native; amazingly adaptable; coarse outline with beautiful winter form; female trees have fairly large oblong seed pods containing the very hard “coffeetree” seeds; 50-60’x 40-50’.

5. **Sugar Maple and related species (Acer saccharum):** Sugar maple is a beautiful and underused tree with great fall color that grows well in eastern Nebraska; common cultivars include ‘Fall Fiesta’ and ‘Legacy’; the Caddo ecotype from Oklahoma has exceptional heat and drought tolerance and includes the cultivars ‘John Pair’ and ‘Autumn Splendor’; 40-60’ x 35-50’. Bigtooth Maple (Acer grandidentatum) is a related species native to Rocky Mountains that is better suited for western Nebraska.

6. **Pecan/Hickory (Carya spp.):** Pecan and Bitternut Hickory are the most adaptable hickories for eastern Nebraska and both deserve to planted in greater abundance; relatively upright and fast growing; transplant when small; 50-70’ x 40-60’.

7. **Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis):** Common native with legendary adaptability; irregular habit when young but matures to stately rounded crown; great street tree and good for a variety of wildlife including several butterfly species; 50-70’ x 40-60’.

8. **Tulip Tree (Liriodendron tulipifera):** Surprisingly adaptable to protected sites in Eastern Nebraska; prefers consistent moisture; tulip-like orange-yellow flowers in spring; distinctive leaves can turn butter yellow in fall; 50-70’ x 35-50’.

9. **Northern Catalpa (Catalpa speciosa):** Midwest native; upright and irregular growth habit; large, heart-shaped leaves, showy flowers and long seed pods; very adaptable; 50-70’ x 30-50’.

10. **Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis):** Sycamore is a terrific choice for the eastern half of Nebraska; tough and tall growing with beautiful mottled and creamy/white bark; good on wet sites; up to 80’x 50’. Sycamore’s very similar hybrid cousin the London Planetree (Platanus x acerifolia) is more commercially available and is anthracnose resistant, but not quite as hardy.

11. **Ohio Buckeye (Aesculus glabra):** Native; tough & adaptable; medium-sized tree with rounded form; butter-yellow flower spikes in spring; ‘buckeye’ seeds produced in leathery husks; good drought tolerance and good fall color in western Nebraska; 30’ x 30’.

12. **Ginkgo (Ginkgo biloba):** An ancient species dating to the age of dinosaurs; distinctive fan-shaped leaves that turn golden-yellow in the fall; upright branching habit; slow growing but tolerant of poor soils; 50’ x 40’.

13. **Black Walnut (Juglans nigra):** This tough native can be a bit messy, but is still a good tree for backyards and parks; incredible drought tolerance and good yellow fall color; don’t plant near vegetable gardens; great for wildlife; good lumber tree; 60’x 45’.

14. **Honeylocust (thornless) (Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis):** A very tough and adaptable tree that seems to thrive on neglect; graceful habit and feathery leaves that turn a rich golden yellow in the fall; choose seedless cultivars; 50-70’x 40-60’.

15. **American Elm (Ulmus americana):** Disease-resistant cultivars of American elm worth planting include ‘Princeton’ & ‘Jefferson’ as well low local ecotypes selected by NSA. Such elms provide high-canopy, arching shade and grow 60-80’ x 60-80’. Beware! American elms need careful structural pruning when young and should be limited primarily to street tree and park plantings.

16. **Other Elms (Ulmus spp.):** Several hybrid elms with proven drought tolerance and adaptability are now available including ‘Triumph’, ‘Accolade’, ‘Frontier’, and ‘New Horizon’. Japanese elm (Ulmus davidiana var. japonica) including the ‘Discovery’ cultivar is an especially promising mid-sized tree. Beware! All elms require frequent structural pruning when young to maintain good form.

17. **Ponderosa Pine (Pinus ponderosa):** Native to western Nebraska; tough and reliable with great drought tolerance; with age and size, becomes a useful shade tree as lower limbs shade out, leaving a relatively rounded canopy; 40-60’x 30-40’.

18. **Rocky Mountain Juniper (Juniperus scopolorum):** Western Nebraska relative of eastern red-cedar; amazingly drought tolerant; old trees become useful shade trees; great for wildlife; 30-50’ x 20-30’.

**Note:** This list emphasizes regionally native trees which typically offer more ecological benefits than non-natives. Non-native species should NOT be planted near native woodlands or other natural areas where they may escape and become invasive.