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Ginkgo biloba

Ginkgo, Maidenhair Tree

Ginkgoaceae (Ginkgo)

Type Tree, woody plant

Hardy range 4A to 8A

Height 50' to 75' / 15.20m to 22.80m

Spread 40' to 50' / 12.20m to 15.20m

Growth rate Fast

Form Pyramidal and rounded

Exposure Partial shade or partial sun to full sun

Persistence Deciduous

Bloom Color Green

Bloom Time Spring

The flowers are fragrant.

Native Habitat

Southeast China. Was once native to north America.

Crown, Branch and Twig

This plant is asymmetrical with a medium texture and has an open crown.

This plant's bark is showy.

Branches or twigs are of medium thickness, have a thick and fibrous surface.

Branches droop.

This plant typically grows with one trunk.

Little pruning is required.

This plant has low flammability.

Ginkgo (spp.)

Leaf Color Green

Fall Color Yellow

This plant has attractive foliage and attractive fall colors.

Leaf Identification

Type: Simple

Arrangement: Alternate

Venations: Parallel and palmate

Margins: Lobed

Shapes: Fan-shaped

Length: 2in./5cm to 4in./10cm

Fruit Color Green

The fruit is fleshy, oval and round.

Environment

This plant tolerates drought, occasional wetness and some salt.

This plant will grow in very dry to occasionally wet soil.

Suitable soil is well-drained/loamy, sandy or clay.

The pH preference is an acidic to alkaline (less than 6.8 to more than 7.7) soil.

Landscape Uses

- Street tree
- Specimen

Attributes and Features

- Pest tolerant
- Inconspicuous blooms
- Blooms have an unpleasant odor
- Inconspicuous fruit
- Fruit can be a litter problem
- Ozone tolerant



Culture Notes

Geological evidence suggests that the ginkgo has been growing on earth for the past 150 million years. Despite its antiquity, it is wonderfully suited for city conditions. A Ginkgo tree often grows slowly for several years after transplanting from a field nursery, but then it will eventually grow at a moderate rate, especially if it receives an adequate supply of water and some fertilizer. The open canopy on young plants eventually fills in to form a nice canopy. Trees cast light shade under the canopy making it easier to grow turf under the tree than under other trees with a denser canopy. Plants in containers tolerate moderate soil salt solutions up to about 4 mmhos/cm according to the saturated media extract method.

Do not overwater or plant in a poorly-drained area and keep turf several feet away from the trunk by maintaining a mulch area to help trees become established. Very tolerant of urban soils and pollution. It tolerates high soil salt concentrations originating from de-icing salt applications better than many other plants. Has not been tried extensively in zone 9 in the southeast but there are examples of fine trees in zone 8B. Be sure to purchase a named cultivar to avoid planting a female tree which produces terribly smelly fruit. Unfortunately, male tree pollen is a moderate allergenic.

The Ginkgo is adapted for use as a street tree, even in confined soil spaces. If used as a street tree, the male tree should be used since the female tree has fruit that is considered by most to have a very disagreeable smell when squashed. Pruning to form one central leader when the plant begins to grow vigorously after transplanting. This is usually not too difficult compared to many other trees. It has good survival in ice storms.

Foliage summer nitrogen content on established trees in irrigated landscapes in California ranged from 1.4 - 2.4 percent.

Tree establishment specifications

Choose good quality trees for planting. The most common cause of young tree failure is planting too deep. In most instances, the point where the top-most root in the root ball originates from the trunk (referred to as the root flare zone or root collar) should be located just above the soil surface. You may have to dig into the root ball to find the root flare. If there is nursery soil over this area, scrape it off. Never place ANY soil over the root ball. The planting hole should be at least twice the width of the root ball, preferably wider because roots grow best in loose soil. In all but exceptional circumstances where the soil is very poor, extensive research clearly shows that there is no need to incorporate any amendments into the backfill soil. Simply use the loosened soil that came out of the planting hole. Simply planting with the topmost portion of the root ball slightly higher than the surrounding soil might still install the tree too deep - be sure to locate the root flare.

Weed suppression during establishment is essential. Apply a 3-inch thick layer of mulch to at least a six-foot diameter circle around the tree. This area should be at least two feet in diameter for each inch of tree trunk diameter and maintained during the establishment period. Apply a thinner layer of mulch directly over the root ball but keep it at least 10 inches from the trunk. This allows rainwater, irrigation and air to easily enter the root ball and keeps the trunk dry. Placing mulch against the trunk and applying too thick a layer above the root ball can kill the plant by oxygen starvation, death of bark, stem and root diseases, prevention of hardening off for winter, vole and other rodent damage to the trunk, keeping soil too wet, or repelling water.

Regular irrigation after planting encourages rapid root growth that is essential for tree establishment. Trees provided with regular irrigation through the first growing season after transplanting require about 3 months (hardiness zones 9-11), 6 months (hardiness zones 7-8), or one year or more (hardiness zones 2-6) per inch of trunk diameter to fully establish roots in the landscape soil. Trees in desert climates may take longer to establish. Trees that are under-irrigated during this establishment period (and most trees are) often require additional time to establish because roots grow more slowly. Be prepared to irrigate through the entire establishment period, especially during periods of drought.

Irrigation also helps maintain and encourage the desirable dominant leader in the tree canopy on large-maturing trees. Instead of a dominant leader, trees that are under-irrigated during the establishment period often develop undesirable, low, co-dominant stems and double leaders that can split from the tree later.

Unlike established plants, which do best with deep, infrequent irrigation, research clearly shows that recently transplanted trees and shrubs establish quickest with light, frequent irrigation. For trees planted in spring or summer, provide one (cooler hardiness zones) to three irrigations (warmer hardiness zones) each week during the first few months after planting. Daily irrigation in the warmest hardiness zones provides the quickest establishment. Following the initial few months of frequent irrigation, provide weekly irrigation until plants are fully established. With every irrigation, apply one (cool climates) to two (warm climates) gallons of water per inch trunk diameter (e.g. 2 to 4 gallons for a 2-inch tree) over the root ball only. In most landscapes that receive more than 30 inches of rain or irrigation annually, if the mulch area is maintained weed-free, irrigation does not need to be applied outside of the root ball. Never add water if the root ball is saturated.

In cooler hardiness zones, in all but the driest years, irrigation of spring- and summer-planted trees usually can be discontinued



once fall color has begun. Irrigation of fall planted trees, however, should be continued until foliage has dropped from the deciduous trees in the region. In warmer climates, irrigate fall-and winter-planted trees as described for the spring- and summer-planted trees.

In drier, desert climates there is benefit to be gained from applying additional irrigation outside of the root ball area. This is best done by making a large diameter berm four to six inches high, then filling it with water so it percolates into the soil. For the first two years, irrigate twice each week through the spring, once per week in summer provided monsoons arrive, and twice each week again in fall if it remains warm. Taper off watering to once or twice each month in winter and resume twice weekly next spring. For years three to five, water twice per month in spring, summer, and fall and once or twice per month in winter. During years five through seven, water once every three weeks in warm weather and once every six weeks in winter. After this, the drought-tolerant desert trees should be able to survive on natural rainfall.

Trees with good, strong structure need no pruning at planting, except to remove broken twigs. Do not remove branches to compensate for root loss - research has shown that this can be detrimental to establishment.

Pests, Diseases and Damaging Agents

Pests: Pest-free in most regions. Considered resistant to gypsy moth. Potentially resistant to the Asian Longhorn Beetle. Susceptible to the formosan termite (*Coptotermes formosanus*).

