

Ten Small Maturing Trees

For Tight South Florida spaces

By Michael Orfanedes, Ph.D. –Extension Agent IV, UF/IFAS
Broward County

Trees not only beautify our homes and increase property values, but also fight climate change by trapping CO2. Presented here are some of the best trees to use in urban settings, where there often isn't sufficient room for larger canopy trees. This selection of small trees will be easy to maintain and create much needed species diversity, beauty, and wildlife habitat.

Bahama Strongbark (*Bourreria succulenta*)



Medium-green foliage with somewhat upright habit 15-20 feet; umbrella like growth with weeping branches; small white, fragrant flowers, colorful orange-red small berries in clusters year-round, but not messy; attract hummingbirds, butterflies and other beneficial pollinators; drought tolerant, full sun – part shade, native.

Cinnamon Bark (*Canella winterana*)



Medium-textured, dark green and lustrous oblong foliage; mostly upright growth habit; 15-20 feet; red fragrant flowers in clusters a good part of the year; produces some tiny round red berries but not messy; drought tolerant; full sun to part shade; native.

Crepe Myrtle White Cultivar 'Natchez' and Select Pink Varieties (*Lagerstroemia* spp.)



A few of the crepe myrtles do well in South Florida although most are better adapted to zones 8-9; (*Note: watermelon-colored or red blooming cultivars do not do well in South Florida*) upright spreading habit, 10-15 feet; small, medium-green foliage; showy white or pink/ lavender blooms depending on the cultivar, in spring through summer; not fragrant; deciduous (leafless during our winter months); pollinator friendly, not messy; full sun, non-native

Jamaican Caper (*Capparis cynophallophora*)



Light to medium green foliage; medium textured glossy oval foliage; upright, dense habit, can be used as a hedge; 10-15 feet; very showy, two-inch long purplish/ pink and white flowers in spring; quite fragrant; long cylindrical seed pods open to reveal attractive orange centers, pollinator and bird friendly; full sun to shade; native

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Japanese Blueberry (*Elaeocarpus decipiens*)



New foliage reddish tinged turning a handsome dark green when mature; lanceolate medium-sized leaves; upright spreading habit; 15-20 feet; small, white understated flowers in spring with dark blue inedible small berries in fall and winter; not messy; susceptible to Lobate Lac Scale but easily controlled with systemic insecticide; non-native.

Orange Geiger (*Cordia sebestena*)



Medium large dark green oval rough leaves; upright habit 15-20 feet; very showy bright orange clusters of flowers spring through summer; fruits small, white and egg-shaped but not messy; susceptible to Geiger Beetle which can cause cosmetic damage; drought tolerant, pollinator and bird friendly, full sun; native.

Pigeon Plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*)



Medium to large oval-shaped foliage; dense round but upright habit; flowers not showy; attractive exfoliating bark; clusters of green fruit turning dark purple ; susceptible to a foliar weevil that occasionally etches new foliage causing cosmetic damage only; 15-20 feet; drought tolerant, full sun to part shade; native.

Silver Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus var. sericeus*)



Beautiful silvery grey, medium-sized oval foliage; upright spreading habit; 10 -15 feet; small greenish, non- showy flower clusters in spring; small cone-like, reddish brown fruits in fall, not messy; ridged and deeply furrowed bark; full sun; native.

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Spanish Stopper (*Eugenia foetida*)



Medium green; small oblong foliage; upright habit; 15-20 feet; small, showy white pin cushion flower clusters in spring; small black fruit; not messy; pollinator and bird friendly; full sun to part shade; native.

Simpson's Stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans*)



Medium green, small, round, slightly bumpy attractive foliage; upright habit 10 -20 feet; profuse white fragrant flowers in spring followed by red, shiny holly-like berries in fall; not messy; attractive exfoliating bark, pollinator and bird attracting; sun to shade; native