

# Five underutilized trees for

By Tom Heald

Springtime is a great time to plant trees in Wyoming.

We often choose trees based on what we see growing near us. That usually means cottonwoods, Colorado blue spruce, green ash, and aspen! But there are many other trees suitable for Wyoming conditions that ought to be considered. Some are native, and others have adapted to our climatic conditions. Here are five trees to consider. Consult with a local nursery or garden center about availability. In some cases, they may need to be special ordered. Oftentimes, if given advance notice, they can obtain these trees from their wholesale growers, and you'll be glad you planted one or more of the varieties if you have the space.

Helpful information can be found at:

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service bulletin, B-1090, *Landscaping: Recommended Trees for Wyoming*, available for free download at <http://ces.uwyo.edu/PUBS/B1090.pdf>.

"How to successfully plant a tree or shrub," was published in the summer 2007 *Barnyards&Backyards* magazine and can be viewed at [www.barnyardsandbackyards.com/Articles/2007.htm](http://www.barnyardsandbackyards.com/Articles/2007.htm).

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## **Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)**

is native to northeast Wyoming and found throughout the Black Hills. It will tend to be pyramidal like an upside down ice cream cone early, and, as it matures, will develop into a tall tree with a massive trunk and very stout branches that can handle our winds. The bark is rough and deeply furrowed. The leaves are dark green on top and gray-green beneath. Acorns up to 1-inch are enclosed by a heavily fringed cap and are prized by wildlife. It has excellent drought tolerance after establishment. Don't plant in boggy soils; it must have good drainage. The bur oak will handle most soils in Wyoming except those with high levels of salt. It can be planted at elevations as high as 8,000 feet.

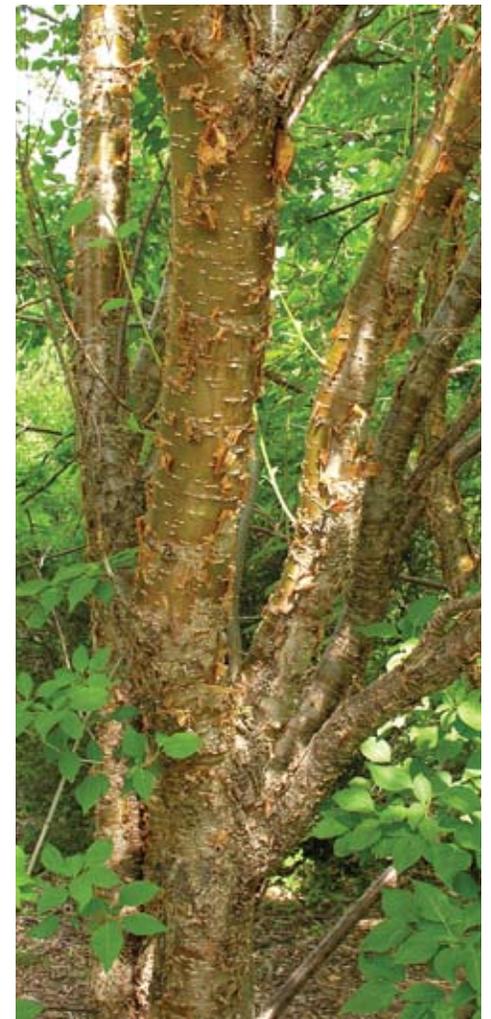
**Zone 3 • Full sun • Height: 50-60 feet • Width: 20-35 feet • Shape: Upright oval**



## **Japanese lilac tree (*Syringa reticulata*)**

makes an excellent accent tree near a patio or bedroom as it is a prolific bearer of 10-18-inch upright creamy white flower clusters in June. Most shrub-form lilacs are susceptible to their blooms getting frost damaged by a late frost, but the tree lilac is the latest to bloom so one is typically assured of flowers. Young branches have a cinnamon-brown bark that naturally peels off in thin layers. It has good drought tolerance after establishment.

**Zone 4 • Full Sun • Height: 20-25 feet • Width: 15-20 feet • Shape: Rounded**



# Wyoming rural landscapes

**Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*)** is surprisingly well adapted to Wyoming. A great small shade tree with dense dark green leaves, it blooms with greenish-white flowers on 6- to 7-inch panicles in late spring and is followed by prickly seed pods. The buckeye seeds are poisonous to people but not squirrels. Autumn colors are outstanding with yellow to different hues of orange. Good drought tolerance after establishment. Known to do well at elevations up to 6,700 feet.

**Zone 3 • Full Sun • Height: 30-40 feet • Width: 30-40 feet • Shape: Broad rounded**



**Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)** is found throughout Wyoming's mountain ranges. This is a great alternative to the Colorado blue spruce having the same pyramidal appearance but with darker and softer needles! It tolerates many soil conditions but not those with high amounts of salts. The cones are distinctive with "tails" that have been described as "looking like a rat running under a shingle." It has fair drought tolerance after establishment. Almost all of the evergreen trees are susceptible to insect attack, and the Douglas fir is no exception. Its nemesis is the Douglas fir beetle. Native stands have come under attack near Cody in the mountains, so it may be wise to forego this tree in that area. In other areas of the state, this should not be a problem. Consult with your Wyoming State Forestry Division representative for further information regarding insect pests in your area. Contact information is available on the Web at <http://slf-web.state.wy.us/forestry/offices.aspx>.

**Zone 3 • Full Sun • Height: 40-80 feet • Width: 18-24 feet • Shape: Open pyramidal**



**Hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.)** are small native and non-native trees; many have thorns, but some don't. There is a surprising number of hawthorns to choose from – more than 175! Those known to do well include Russian hawthorn (*C. ambigua*), Toba hawthorn (*C. x mordenensis* 'Toba'), Douglas hawthorn (*C. douglasii*). All flower in the spring with clusters of white or pinkish white flowers followed by cherry-like red fruit in late summer. Hawthorns make excellent wildlife habitat trees and are quite adaptable to poor soil conditions. Most have excellent drought tolerance after establishment.

**Zone 3-4 • Full sun • Height: 15-25 feet • Width: 15-25 feet • Shape: Broad rounded**

