

Eligible Tree Guide

The nine species the City's Urban Forestry Division currently allows on Harleston Village streets — with photos of each tree grown up, so you can picture it outside your door.

HVA is partnering with the City of Charleston's Urban Forestry Division to plant **15 new trees** on Village streets in 2026. For every two trees bought by participating HVA members, HVA donates a third. The City plants each tree in the public planting strip and cares for it through a 20–30 year productive life.

The right tree for your spot depends on three things: **overhead power lines, planting-strip width**, and **sun**. Urban Forestry makes the final call on species and placement.

UNDER OR NEAR POWER LINES

Choose a small-maturing tree, generally under about 25 ft, to avoid conflicts with lines and utility pruning.

OPEN SITES WITH ROOM TO GROW

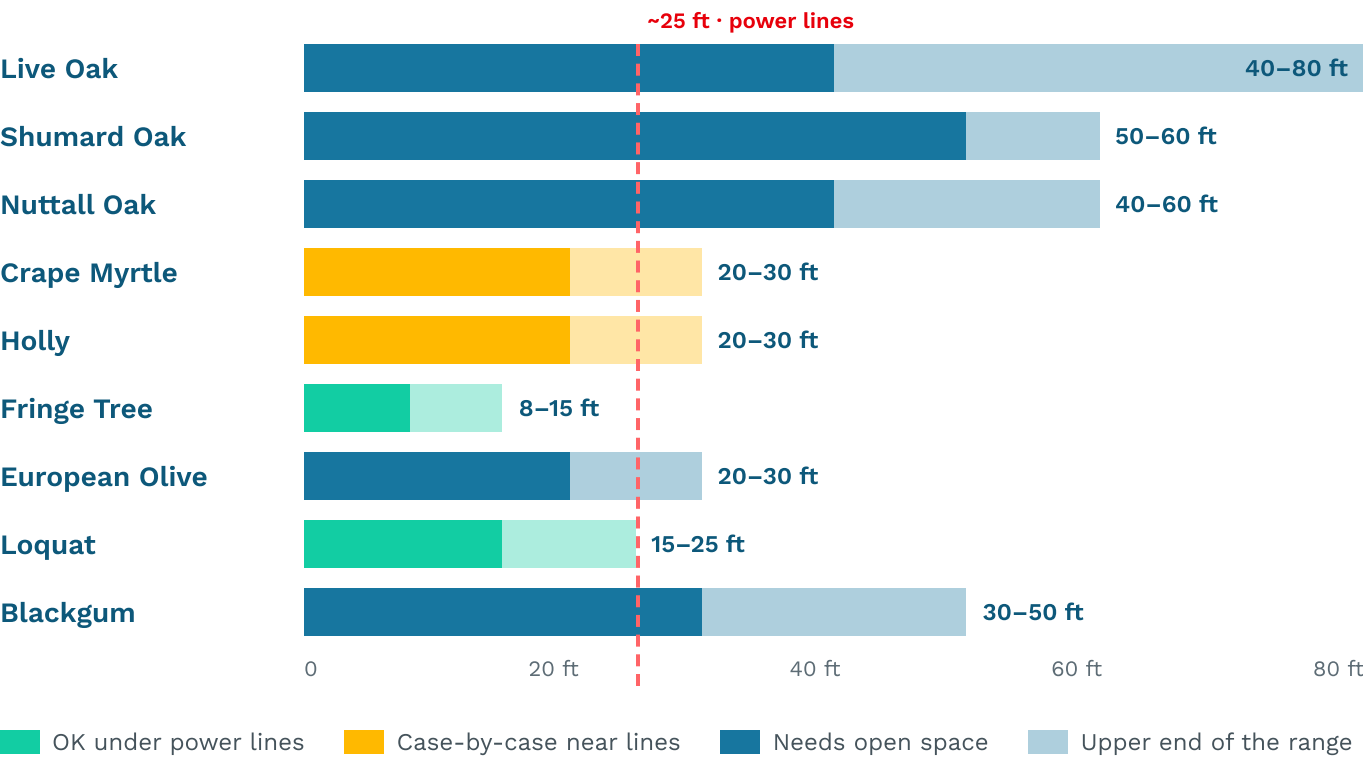
A large shade tree gives the most canopy, cooling and stormwater benefit.

NARROW STRIPS OR TIGHT LOTS

Favor a narrow or smaller-maturing species to avoid foundation and sidewalk conflicts.

How big they get

Mature height range for each species. New trees are planted at about 2" trunk diameter and rarely more than 12 ft tall; these are the sizes they grow into. A two-story house is roughly 25 ft.





Mature live oaks over a residential street in Metairie, Louisiana — what a street planting grows into.

UNDER POWER LINES: NO — OPEN SPACE ONLY

Live Oak

Quercus virginiana

MATURE SIZE
40–80 ft tall
60–100 ft wide

GROWTH RATE
Moderate

Iconic Lowcountry canopy tree; often grows wider than it is tall, so it needs ample room.



Evergreen leaves and spring catkins

PROS

- + Iconic Lowcountry canopy tree with strong neighborhood character
- + Long-lived (100+ years) once established
- + Excellent shade, cooling, and stormwater benefit
- + Deep root system and strong wind resistance

CONS

- Needs open space — not suitable near power lines
- Slow to reach full canopy spread
- Large surface roots can affect nearby sidewalks over time



A young 'Panache' Shumard oak planted in a paved quad in Valdosta, Georgia.

UNDER POWER LINES: NO — LARGE TREE

Shumard Oak

Quercus shumardii

MATURE SIZE
50–60 ft tall
40–50 ft wide

GROWTH RATE
Moderate

Native oak; strong fall color; high clearance once limbed up.



Fall color

PROS

- + Native species with vibrant red-orange fall color
- + Grows relatively quickly for an oak
- + Tolerates urban soil compaction and heat well
- + High canopy clearance once limbed up, good for streets and sidewalks

CONS

- Large mature size — needs a wide planting strip and open overhead space
- Not suitable near power lines
- Requires structural pruning when young to establish clearance



A young 'Sangria' Nuttall oak beside a campus drive in Valdosta, Georgia.

**UNDER POWER LINES: NO —
LARGE TREE**

Nuttall Oak

Quercus texana

MATURE SIZE

40–60 ft tall

35–50 ft wide

GROWTH RATE

Fast

Native bottomland oak; tolerates wet soils; excellent street tree.



Deeply lobed summer leaves

PROS

- + Fast growth means quicker canopy establishment
- + Tolerates wet or poorly drained soils — useful for flood-prone sites
- + Excellent street tree reputation; native species

CONS

- Large mature footprint — unsuitable under power lines or in narrow strips
- Fast growth can mean weaker wood in early years
- Needs regular structural pruning



A white-flowering crape myrtle in July bloom at Duke Gardens, North Carolina.

UNDER POWER LINES: CASE-BY-CASE

Crape Myrtle

Lagerstroemia · Natchez,
Tuskegee, Muskogee

MATURE SIZE

20–30 ft tall

15–25 ft wide

GROWTH RATE

Moderate

Long summer bloom; showy bark; confirm cultivar height near lines.



Summer flower clusters

PROS

- + Long, showy summer bloom period
- + Attractive exfoliating bark for winter interest
- + Moderate size fits narrower planting strips
- + Multiple cultivars available to fine-tune mature height

CONS

- Power-line suitability varies — confirm cultivar height case-by-case
- Prone to “crape murder” if improperly topped or pruned
- Some cultivars susceptible to powdery mildew



An East Palatka holly, one of the eligible cultivars, in Valdosta, Georgia.

UNDER POWER LINES: CASE-BY-CASE

Holly

Ilex · Dahoon, East Palatka, Eagleston

MATURE SIZE
20–30 ft tall
10–15 ft wide

GROWTH RATE
Moderate

Evergreen; berries attract birds; low maintenance.



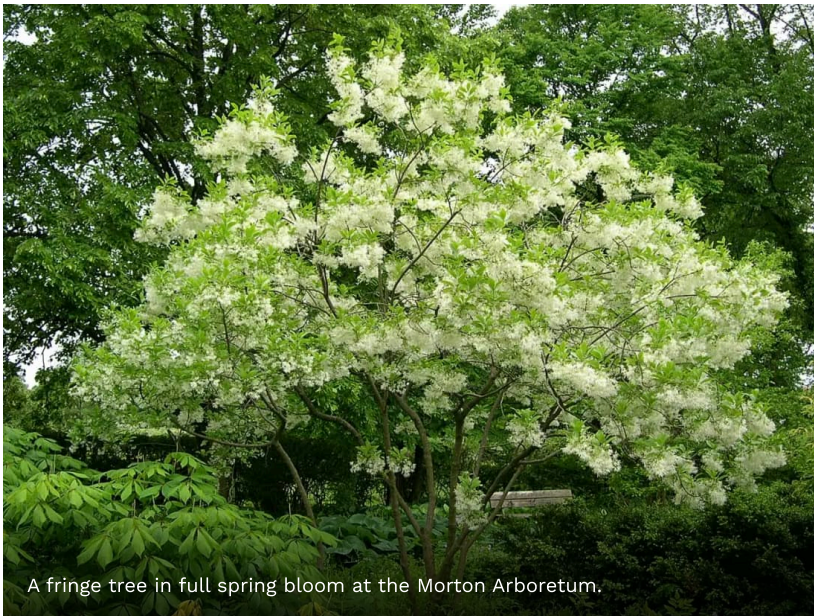
Winter berries ('Foster', East Palatka's sister hybrid)

PROS

- + Evergreen — provides year-round screening and structure
- + Berries attract birds and add winter interest
- + Low maintenance once established
- + Narrower spread suits tighter sites

CONS

- Power-line suitability is case-by-case — confirm cultivar height
- Fallen berries can be messy on sidewalks
- Slower to reach full form than faster-growing species



A fringe tree in full spring bloom at the Morton Arboretum.

UNDER POWER LINES: YES

Fringe Tree

Chionanthus virginicus · if available

MATURE SIZE
8–15 ft tall
6–10 ft wide

GROWTH RATE
Slow

Native; showy spring bloom; limited nursery availability.



The fringe-like spring flowers

PROS

- + Compact size is ideal under power lines and in narrow strips
- + Native species with showy, fragrant spring blooms
- + Low long-term maintenance given small mature size

CONS

- Slow growth means a longer wait for canopy and shade
- Limited nursery availability may delay sourcing
- Minimal shade value given small mature size



Olive trees planted along a city street.

UNDER POWER LINES: NO

European Olive

Olea europaea

MATURE SIZE

20–30 ft tall

20–30 ft wide

GROWTH RATE

Slow–moderate

Drought-tolerant; needs well-drained soil; keep clear of lines.



Silvery leaves and young olives

PROS

- + Highly drought-tolerant once established
- + Distinctive silvery foliage and Mediterranean character
- + Relatively low water needs after establishment

CONS

- Needs well-drained soil — a concern in low-lying, flood-prone areas
- Must be kept clear of power lines
- Slow-to-moderate growth delays canopy benefits



A mature loquat: dense, rounded and evergreen.

UNDER POWER LINES: YES

Loquat

Eriobotrya japonica

MATURE SIZE

15–25 ft tall

15–25 ft wide

GROWTH RATE

Moderate

Evergreen; edible fruit; cold-sensitive in hard freezes.



Spring fruit

PROS

- + Compact enough for use under power lines
- + Evergreen — year-round coverage
- + Produces edible fruit, a neighborhood amenity

CONS

- Cold-sensitive — vulnerable to damage in hard freezes
- Fallen fruit can create sidewalk mess and attract pests
- Not a significant shade producer



A blackgum about five years after planting, in full fall color.

**UNDER POWER LINES: NO —
LARGE TREE**

Blackgum

Nyssa sylvatica

MATURE SIZE

30–50 ft tall

20–30 ft wide

GROWTH RATE

Slow–moderate

Native; brilliant red fall color; excellent wildlife tree.



Fall leaves

PROS

- + Native species with outstanding brilliant red fall color
- + Excellent wildlife tree — fruit is a food source for birds
- + Strong, long-lived structure once mature

CONS

- Large mature size unsuitable under power lines or narrow strips
- Slow-to-moderate growth means a longer establishment period
- Needs ample open space

Ready to pick a tree?

Every request needs photos of the planting site and is reviewed by your Area Steward before it goes to Urban Forestry. Plantings take place December through February. \$295 per tree, paid to the City around planting time; HVA gives one free tree for every two its members plant.

Apply online at harlestonvillageassociation.org/rooted-in-harleston/apply

Resources

Urban Forestry Division · 823 Meeting St, Charleston, SC 29403 · (843) 724-7321

[City Street Tree Program](#)

[Street Tree Manual](#) — full species list and standards

Harleston Village Association — your Area Steward or the Livability Committee chair

Reflects the City of Charleston Street Tree Program and Manual as of 2026. Confirm current fee, species and site requirements with Urban Forestry before finalizing a request.

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