



New Zealand
Christmas Tree
Metrosideros excelsus
Robin M. Orans/
Horticultural Photography™



Pink Melaleuca
Melaleuca nesophila
Muriel Orans/
Horticultural Photography™

Flowering Trees

SMALL SIZE WITH BIG IMPACT

In this hectic day-to-day world it is wonderful to take a moment and step outside our doors and admire the beauty of nature. Trees in your garden can be one such source of pleasure. Some trees should be admired from a distance to grasp their full splendor and size such as the purple flowering Jacaranda or the stately evergreen Magnolia. Then there are the trees that are so perfect in their fine details that they are small treasures beckoning to be enjoyed up close. Touch the fine papery texture of the Crepe Myrtle flowers or admire the red and yellow colors of Coral Gum flower buds. These trees show us that beauty can be in the fine details of color, texture and form. Smaller growing trees with mature heights of 15-40 feet will fit in most home gardens perfectly.

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By Ann Hopkinson, Valley Crest Tree Company

The trees covered in this article will add month after month of interest and beauty to any garden. They have much to offer; interesting flowers; long blooming periods; unusual growth habits; unique fruit, seed pods or bark to name just a few of their attributes. These are not your usual spring flowering trees that burst into bloom for a few weeks and then are done for the year. Many of the trees discussed here bloom off and on all year long or have continuous blooms for months at a time. Southern California and its mild climate make a perfect growing environment for many different types of evergreen flowering trees from around the world. Here are seven examples that will entice you to your garden for a brief encounter with the beauty of nature.



Australian Tea Tree

Australian Tea Tree

Leptospermum laevigatum

photo provided by Valley Crest Tree Company

- Flowers are white, small and abundant appearing along the branches in spring and often year around
- Low growing tree with twisted gnarled trunks and showy textured bark
- Can add an interesting sculptural form to the garden
- Will reach 15 to 20 feet tall if trained for upright growth but most often seen as a multiple trunk or prostrate form
- Thin finely textured leaves are gray-green all year round
- Can be easily trained almost like a bonsai form, takes clipping to form a hedge or screen, or prune to expose twisted gnarled trunks



Crepe Myrtle

Crepe Myrtle

Lagerstroemia indica or *Lagerstroemia x fauriei* hybrid

photo provided by Valley Crest Tree Company

- One of the showiest summer flowering trees
- Flowers are delicate crepe paper-like clusters
- Blooms continuously for weeks or months during late spring and summer
- Multiple flower colors available; white, red, pink, lavender, purple
- *L. indica* varieties attain a mature height of 10 to 30 feet tall
- *L. x fauriei* hybrids can get much larger or 35 to 50 feet tall
- Deciduous with most varieties showing bright fall colors
- Many varieties, especially the *L. x fauriei* hybrids have thin bark that exfoliates exposing mottled trunks
- Use the *L. x fauriei* hybrids in humid areas or near the coast to avoid powdery mildew problem; performs best in full sun
- Good tree for many applications such as street tree, patio or garden tree
- Smaller growing *L. indica* varieties can be used in large planters or containers

Coral Gum

Eucalyptus torquata

photo provided by Valley Crest Tree Company

- Flowers are coral red and yellow throughout the year and make good cut flowers
- Nice small growing Eucalyptus variety suitable for a home garden
- Only reaches a mature height of 15 to 30 feet with a narrow upright form
- Flower buds are interesting red to coral red capsules that hang on branches
- The combination of the capsules and the flowers is quite striking and colorful
- Full sun tree that is low maintenance and will not 'over power' like other Eucalyptus varieties

Hong Kong Orchid Tree

Bauhinia x Blakeana

photo provided by Valley Crest Tree Company

- Orchid like flowers 5 to 6 inches wide
- Colors range from purplish rose to pink and everything in-between
- Bloom over long season from fall to spring
- Light green bi-lobed heart-like leaves
- Mature height is about 20 to 25 feet
- Evergreen or briefly deciduous
- Useful as a garden specimen, shade tree, near a patio or deck
- Flowers can be messy but unlike the *B. variegata* variety there are no seedpods to clean up; the leaves are interesting and beautiful; form can be open and awkward so proper pruning to train crown is necessary especially when young

Marina Strawberry Tree

Arbutus x 'Marina'

photo provided by Valley Crest Tree Company

- 6 inch clusters of hanging urn-like pink flowers
- Strawberry-like edible fruit that are yellow when young turning red upon maturity
- Exfoliating bark exposes a cinnamon-red trunk underneath
- Evergreen tree that grows to about 40 feet tall with a broad crown
- Large dark green leaves with bronze tinge to new growth
- Blooms winter into early spring and sometimes again in summer
- The bark, flowers and fruit add color and interest to this tree year around
- Nice versatile tree that can be used as a shade tree, street tree, near a patio or deck
- Can also be found as a multi trunk screening tree or picturesque specimen

Pink Melaleuca

Melaleuca nesophila

photo on page 5, Muriel Orans/Horticultural Photography™

- Round 1 inch balls of flowers appear on branch ends most of the year
- Flower color starts off as mauve and fades to white
- Grown as a small multiple trunk tree or large shrub
- Can tolerate seashore conditions and rocky soils
- Flaky coarse bark on trunks that can be twisted and sculptural in form
- Grows 15-20 feet tall with an equal spread
- Gray green leaves feel spongy and thick
- Focal point tree when big or can be used for screening

New Zealand Christmas Tree

Metrosideros excelsus

photo on cover and page 5

- Big 3 to 5 inch clusters of dark red flowers with large stamens appear on ends of branches
- A tropical looking evergreen tree that reaches a mature height of 30 feet
- Very bushy form usually seen as a multi trunk tree
- Flowering time is late spring into early summer
- Needs room to spread but makes a nice lawn tree, shade tree or use as a focal point
- The contrast between the dark red flowers and the dark green leaves with white underneath makes this tree colorful and beautiful
- Requires training and shaping when young to promote the formation of a round canopy
- Considered disease and pest resistant **PRO**



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