



**Abilene Tree Board Meeting Agenda
Abilene Public Library – Malott Room
209 NW 4th Street
Tuesday, September 2, 2025 – 5:30 pm**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call: ___ Drew Snitker ___ Tim Strunk ___ Hayley Whitehair
 ___ Vice-Chair Corey Jones ___ Chair Steven Flynn
3. Approval of Agenda – September 2, 2025
4. Approval of Minutes – April 25, 2025
5. Business
 - Budget Update
 - Ordinance No. 3103
 - KFS Arbor Day Poster Contest
 - Library Tree
 - Tree Inventory: Dead Trees
 - Tree Recommendation List
6. Comments
7. Adjournment



Abilene Tree Board Meeting Minutes April 25, 2025

Eisenhower Elementary School – 1101 N. Vine Street at 8:30 am.

(A Tree Board meeting will follow the presentation & planting.)

St. Andrew's Elementary School – 301 S. Buckeye Avenue at 10:05 am.

Members Present: Steve Flynn, Corey Jones, Drew Snitker, and Tim Strunk

Members Absent: Hayley Whitehair

Staff Present: Jennie Hiatt

Others Present: none

1. Call to Order

Chair Flynn called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Present: Flynn, Jones, Snitker, and Strunk

3. Approval of the Agenda

Strunk motioned to approve the agenda as written, and Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

4. Approval of the Minutes from September 30, 2024

Strunk motioned to approve the minutes as written, and Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

5. Business

- **Elections**

Strunk motioned to re-elect Flynn as chair and Jones as vice-chair, and Snitker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

- **Budget**

Hiatt stated that the original budget for 2025 was \$5,000 and that with the expenses incurred so far, the balance is \$4,130.06, which does not include the remaining costs for Arbor Day.

- **Kansas Forest Service – Tree Inventory**

The information in the tree inventory and Blaine's comments when he presented to the Tree Board and the City Commission were discussed.

6. Comments

There was discussion.

7. Adjournment

Strunk motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Snitker seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously (4-0), and the meeting was adjourned.

Attest

Minutes Approved,

Jennie Hiatt
Administrative Manager

Steve Flynn, Chair
Corey Jones, Vice-Chair

FEATURED

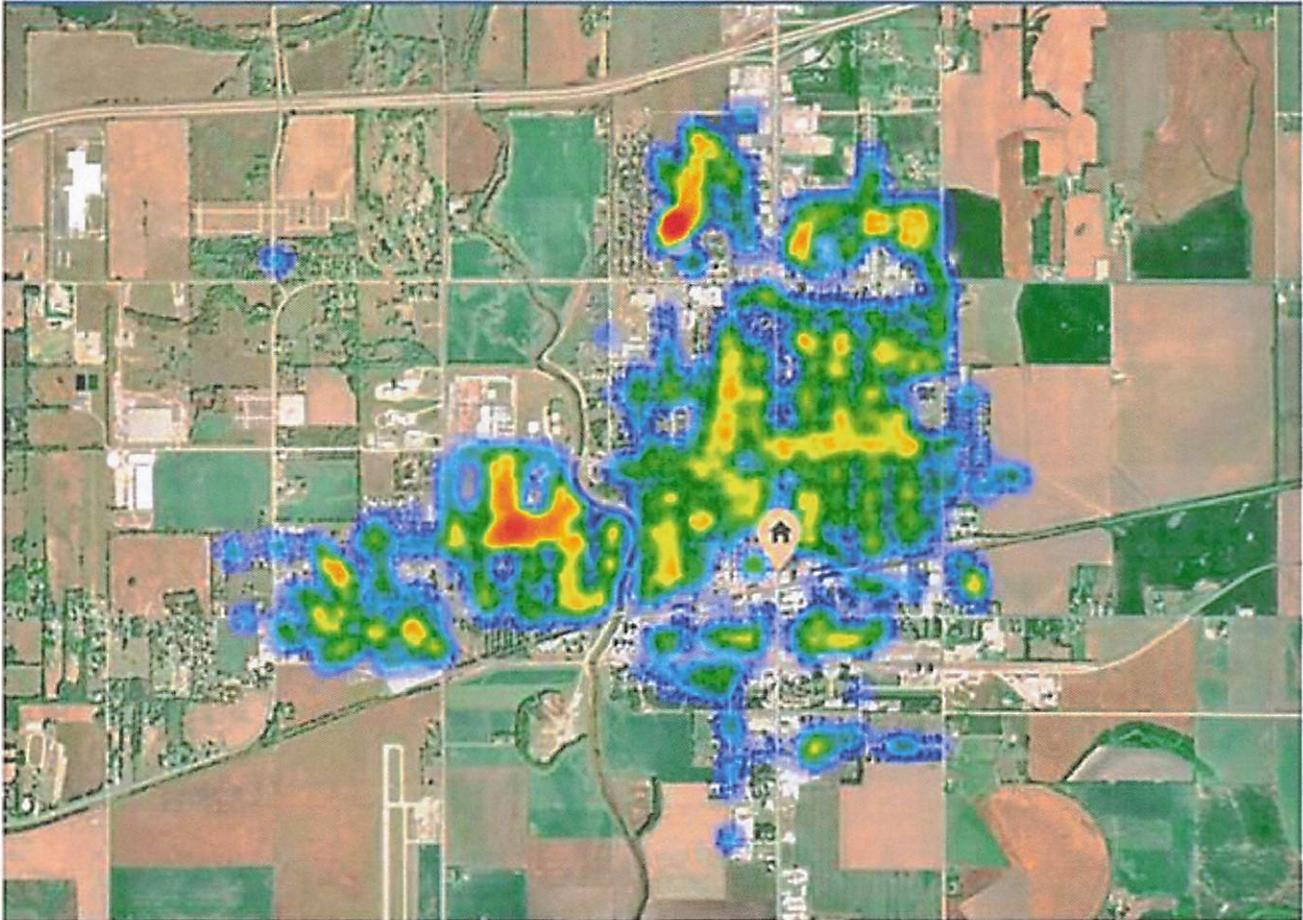
Report: Abilene has 99 dead/dying trees

By Ed Boice Abilene Reflector-Chronicle

Apr 27, 2025

1 of 2

Tree Canopy Gaps



Graphics by the Kansas Forest Service

Each dot represents a dead/dying tree. The colors represent a species of tree.

The city of Abilene recently received a report from the Kansas Forest Service about all the trees in the city's right of ways, parks and downtown areas.

The report covers a range of topics from the quality of each tree, tree canopy gaps, recommendations for the city and other tree-related topics.

Blaine Strobel, community forester for Kansas Forest Service, went over the report during the Abilene City Commission's April 14 meeting.

The service conducted a tree survey in the summer of 2024 for this report. The report can be found in the agenda for the city's April 14 meeting.

Tree species

About 3,300 trees are in Abilene's public spaces. The most common species in Abilene is the silver maple at approximately 550. The silver maple makes up almost 17% of all the trees in the city.

The next most populous species in the city is the northern hackberry at around 250. Strobel said the city in the future should diversify more of their trees to avoid a high majority of any species of tree. This will decrease the negative impact of a virus or an insect killing all of a species or genes.

The service recommends a species should not number more than 10% of the total trees.

Tree quality

The service labeled each tree with one of four conditions: good, fair, poor and dead/dying.

99 of Abilene's trees are dead or dying. Also displayed on a map from the forest service, the dead/dying trees are mostly equally spread throughout the city, so no specific area is in danger of losing a significant number of trees. Strobel said these trees should be removed as soon as possible.

Ash trees in Abilene are in danger. An insect called the emerald ash borer has been sweeping through the U.S., killing specifically ash trees through its reproduction cycle.

First discovered in the U.S. in 2012, experts estimate the bug has killed approximately 70 million U.S. ash trees. While the borer has not made its way to Abilene, Strobel said the insect will arrive eventually.

The insect is already in several counties in Kansas. Abilene has 106 ash trees. Those will all die and need to be removed once the ash borer arrives in Abilene and kills them.

Strobel said the city should begin to budget for when those trees need removing. This situation is another reason the city should plan to diversify the species of trees, so the effects of an event such as the ash tree are not as devastating.

Canopy gaps

The forest service created a heat map of where all the trees on public land are and their density. The map shows that the highest density of trees is in the Eisenhower Park area and in between N. Mulberry Street and the Abilene Cemetery.

The areas with the least amount of trees are south of the Union Pacific Railroad and along the east city limits.

Recommendations

Strobel and the report recommend four goals for the city.

The first is to increase the diversity of the city's trees to protect the overall tree population if a virus or insect kills all of a species..

The second is to plant new trees to replace the dead/dying trees and prepare for when older trees do die. Strobel said the majority of the city's trees are overly mature.

The third is to set up management zones and priority areas for the city's roads to ensure routine pruning is completed in preparation for natural disasters, especially along roads used for emergency routes.

Lastly is the removal of dead/dying trees. Stroble said this recommendation is the most important.

The report recommends the city budget to remove 20 to 30 dead trees each year until all the dead/dying trees are removed. Strobel also recommended the city should take the full responsibility of maintaining and removing trees. Currently, homeowners are responsible for maintaining trees and removing dead trees on right of ways bordering their property, according to chapter six article seven of the city's code.

Strobel said the tree service recently lost federally funded programs that aided in the removal of dead trees due to the widespread budget cuts occurring at the federal level. There are several ways for the city to budget for tree removal. Some communities Strobel has worked with are thinking about implementing a special tax for a tree fund.

The Kansas Forest Service's report can be found in the Abilene City Commission's April 14 meeting agenda on the city website.

Contact Ron Preston at sports@abilene-rc.com.

Condition

The condition and health of the species is an important consideration. At the time of the inventory, the summarized field data shows that 44% of all trees are reported to be in good condition, followed by 39% in fair, and 14% in poor condition. Approximately one hundred trees (6%) dead and dying trees were identified. This is somewhat of a similar breakdown of what we would find in many Kansas communities. Such categories help to easily identify future management needs.

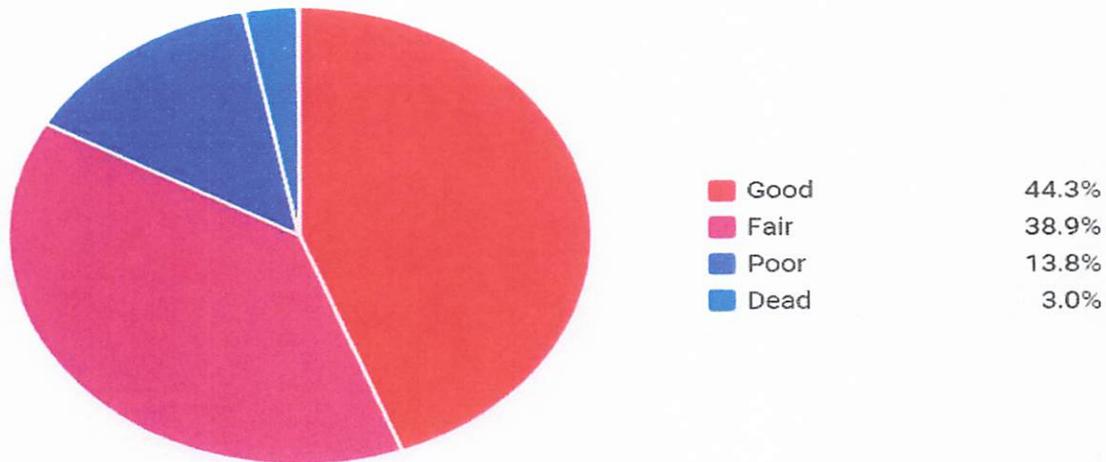


Table 5 - Condition

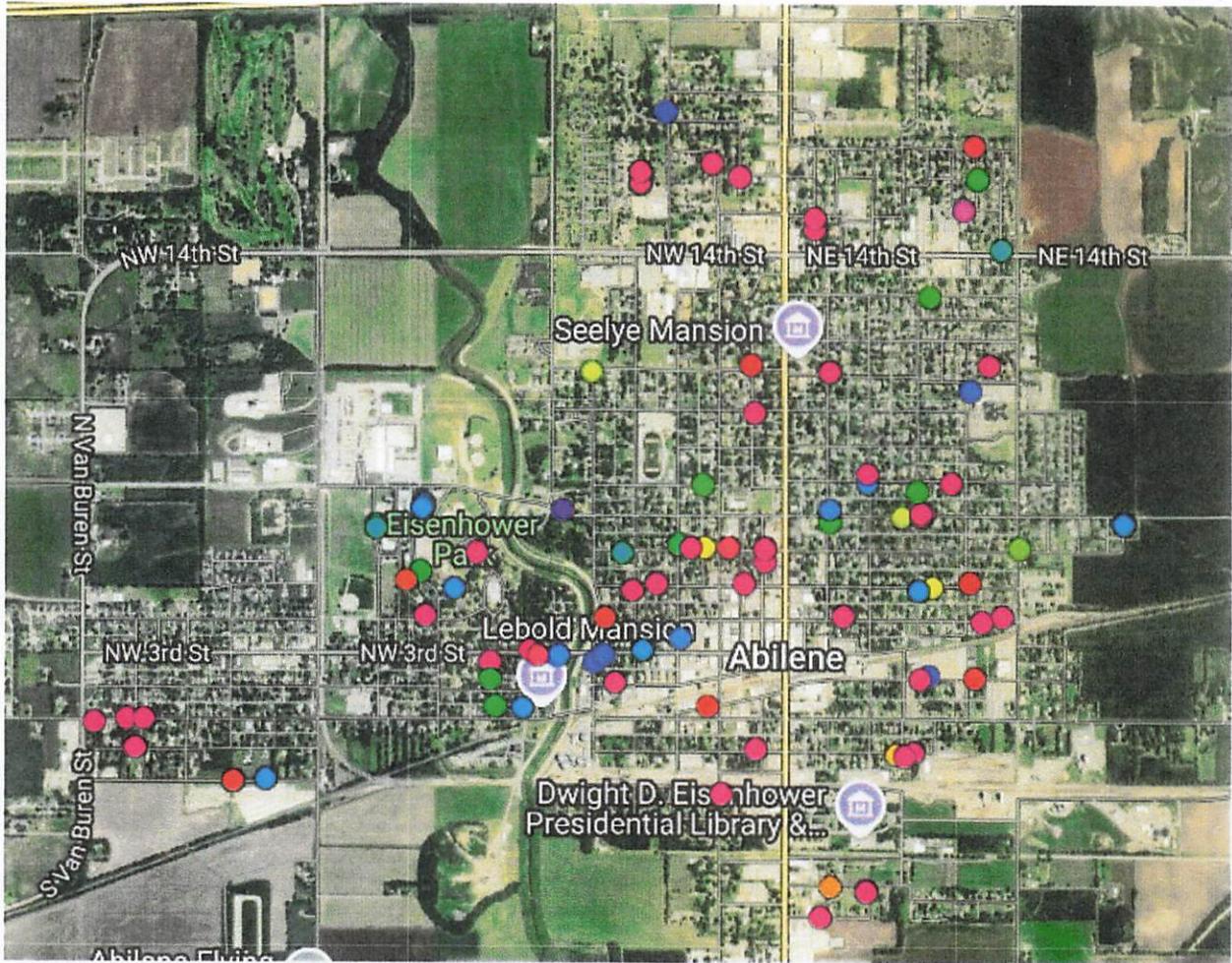
For example, based on the breakdown of condition classes, 1,458 trees (44%) have no specific management needs, 1,278 trees (39%) require minor pruning, maintenance, or insect and disease controls, and 452 trees (14%) require more intensive management intervention. All dead and dying trees should be removed as quickly as possible.

Condition - Common Name	Good	Fair	Poor	Dead	Total
Silver maple	204	245	87	14	550
Northern hackberry	109	121	25	3	258
Siberian elm	14	104	105	30	253
Northern red oak	145	50	9	1	205
Conifer Evergreen Large Other	109	38	7	1	155
Pear	62	69	20	1	152
American elm	46	79	17	6	148
Sugar maple	68	40	10	2	120
Broadleaf Deciduous Small Other	73	28	8	2	111
Bur oak	76	25	4	0	105

Table 6 - Condition/Species

Threatened Areas

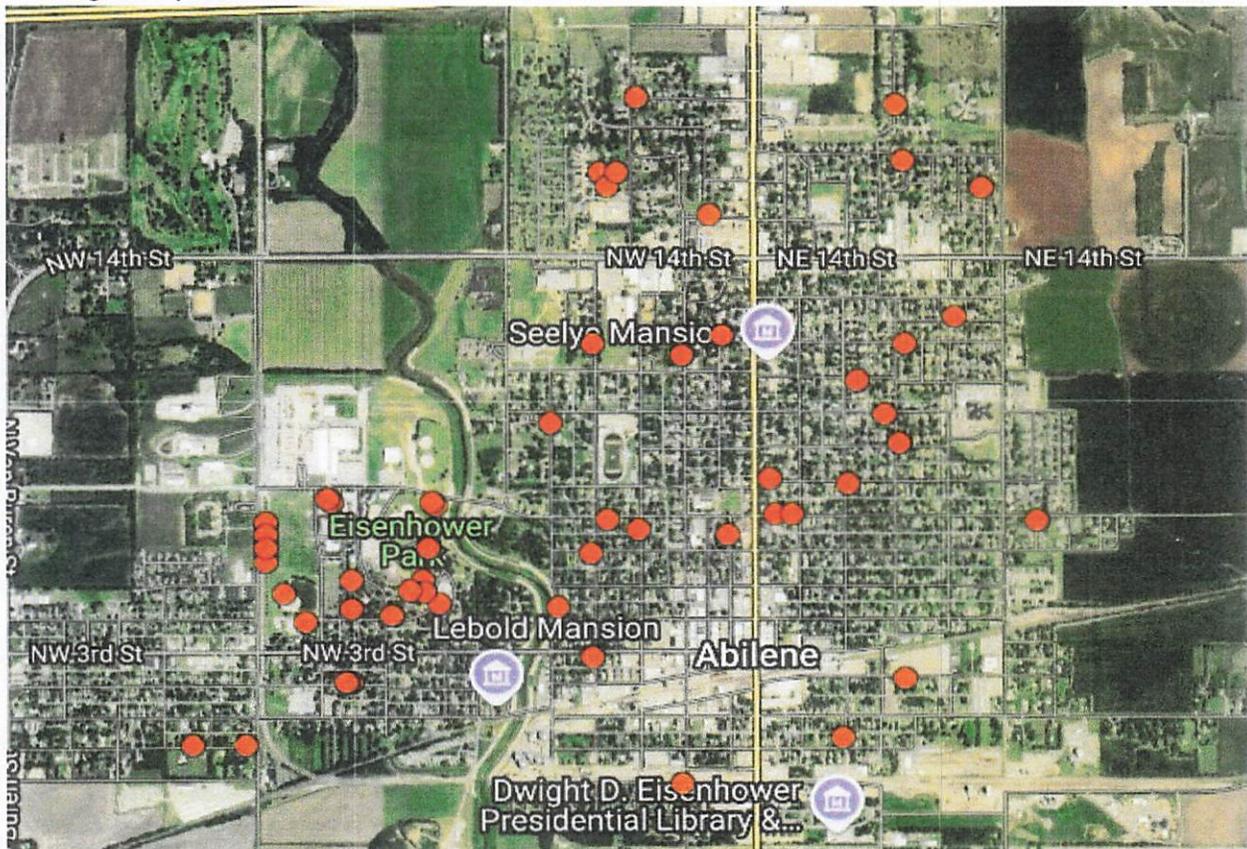
Looking at the data, we can see a couple different areas and species to keep an eye out for in the future. Immediately, as shown below, there are ninety-nine trees throughout town that are labeled as dead and in need of removal. These removals are spread equally throughout town, showing us that there is not a focus area regarding dead and hazardous trees. Proper steps for prioritizing removals would include first focusing on park trees, then moving on to main roads and thoroughfares throughout town. These are the highest-risk areas, where the public can be impacted the greatest.



Dead Tree Dispersion

Threatened Species

Ash is considered a species of focus throughout Kansas right now due to the Emerald Ash Borer, also referred to as EAB, this exotic invasive beetle was brought over to the U.S. through infested packing material. At least seventy million ash trees have already been destroyed across the United States, and it is very actively making its impact on Kansas following its first detection in 2012. Adults are usually present in summer months, where they lay their eggs in the crevices of the Ash bark, once hatched, larvae begin to chew through the outer bark to the phloem where they feed, forming an S-shaped gallery. This feeding is what causes damage to the tree, interrupting the transportation of water and nutrients within the tree. The larvae then overwinter in the sapwood and emerge in the spring as adults creating D-shaped exit holes.



Ash Tree Dispersion

This is important to be aware of and plan accordingly because unfortunately with this insect, it is not a matter of whether it comes to Abilene, but when and where there is not much that can be done to stop it. EAB has been detected in fifteen counties in Kansas, ranging from the Nebraska and Missouri state lines, down to Lyon County. While chemical treatments can be injected to prevent infestation of EAB, these services are often extremely expensive and need renewed every few years.

Abilene has 106 Ash trees recorded in the inventory, and planning is advised to prepare for removal of these trees. Once EAB becomes present, removal of massive quantities of trees at once can be difficult due to budget and labor. Spreading the workload over a few years can help accomplish the task most effectively.



Dead/Dying Tree

remove all dead and dying trees at once. However, setting a realistic goal to remove 20-30 trees per year will gradually work on lowering the number of hazard trees while also allowing time for additional removals throughout the community as needed.

Action steps

- Identify and map using inventory data provided all dead and dying trees.
- Correlate dead and dying trees with priority areas throughout town.
- Secure contractor bids
- Begin removal of dead and dying hazard trees

Removal of dead/dying Trees

Using the inventory results, we can properly identify and locate the most problematic hazard trees. Removal of these listed hazard trees is the primary action step for any community. Hazard trees are problematic for numerous reasons but the largest is simply safety. Not only for citizens utilizing public spaces, but also for vehicles, private property, and other trees.

When hazard trees fail, the results can be devastating. Our primary objective with these inventory results is to better understand what trees are in a community and where they are, and what condition they are in. Abilene has about one hundred trees listed in the dead and dying category.

Utilizing the inventory data collected, the community should be able to identify the highest priority trees within this category and work

on a removal plan. Often a community will be unable to

Planting and Maintenance Standards

H.OFFICIAL STREET TREE SPECIES

Trees of mature height of more than 40 feet

Oak

White — Bur, Chinkapin, Swamp White, English

Red — Shumard, Shingle, Northern Red

Other — Sawtooth

Maple

Sugar — All adaptable Sugar Maples, especially Caddo such as Flashfire

Red — Adaptable variety's including Freeman hybrids

Norway — All adaptable variety's

Linden

American, Silverleaf and little leaf

London Plane Tree

Kentucky Coffeetree

Gingko (male specimens only)

Osage-Orange (fruitless and thornless)

Trees of mature Height less than 40 feet

Cherry, Canada Red and Japanese

Crabapple, Flowering

Goldenraintree

Hawthorn, Winter King, Washington, and Thornless Cockspur

Lilac, Japanese Tree

Maples Asian — Amur and Shantung

Caddo Sugar Maple — John Pair

American Hornbeam

Pear, Callery (expect Bradford)

Redbud

Western Soapberry

Trees that are prohibited and should not be planted

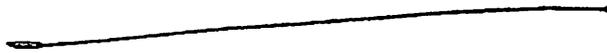
Silver Maple- due to poor structure and prone to storm damage and over planted

Elm — Siberian (commonly known as Chinese elm in the area) — due to short life, poor structure, prone to disease and over planted

Ash — Green and White — Due to Emerald Ash Bour

Bradford Pear — Over planted and invasive

Cottonwood



Small Trees (usually under 20 feet at maturity)

- Amur maple
- Japanese tree lilac
- Autumn Brilliance serviceberry
- Saskatoon serviceberry
- Winterberry euonymous
- Common chokecherry
- Tree-form viburnums
- American smoketree

Medium Trees (usually 20 to 40 feet at maturity)

- Trident maple
- American yellowwood
- Japanese pagodatree
- Osage-orange (thornless/fruitless)
- Chinkapin oak
- Overcup oak
- Persimmon
- American hornbeam

Large Trees (more than 40 feet at maturity)

- European hornbeam
- Ginkgo (male selections)
- London planetree
- White oak
- Swamp white oak
- Nuttall oak
- Shumard oak
- American sweetgum
- American and littleleaf linden
- Lacebark elm

Evergreen Trees

- Upright Chinese junipers
- Limber pine
- Southwestern white pine
- White/Black Hills spruce



Blackhaw Viburnum



Ginkgo Fall Color



White Spruce



Winterberry Euonymous Fruits



Keteleeri Chinese Juniper



Limber Pine



American Smoketree Fall Color

Species	Reason	Alternative
Hackberry Silver maple Eastern redbud	Overstocked or near overstocking potential	Ginkgo (male) American linden Baldcypress Serviceberry
Green and white ash	Borers – emerald ash borer and native borers; ash yellows disease	American yellowwood Western soapberry Lacebark elm Japanese pagoda tree
Green ash Siberian elm Hackberry Silver maple	Hazard tree potential	Shantung maple and hybrids Osage-orange (male) London planetree Turkish filbert
Scotch and Austrian pine	Pine Wilt disease Needle diseases	Limber or pinyon pine Black Hills spruce Southwestern white pine
Red Oak species	Oak Wilt disease	Wide variety of white oak species Baldcypress European hornbeam
Honeylocust	Thyronectria canker Honeylocust complex	Eastern hophornbeam Littleleaf linden American elm (DED resistant)

Species to Avoid

Coupled with the knowledge of what “not” to plant is the recognition of what can be successfully established in Abilene. I offer the following suggestions towards increasing diversity in the community. I do, however, emphasize that there is more than is listed below that could be considered in city planting projects. Please refer to the enclosed *Preferred Tree List for Northeast Kansas and Trees Worth Trying* for further details and expanded species recommendations.