

The Columbus Dispatch

BOOKS

Update fleshes out best trees for region

HOME AND GARDEN

By **Jim Weiker**

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Upper Arlington resident Scott Zanon makes his living selling defibrillators to keep humans alive, but his passion lies with another species.

Zanon, 53, has just published *Landscaping with Trees in the Midwest* (Ohio University Press, \$26.95), an update of his 2009 book, *Desirable Trees for the Midwest*.

The user-friendly, generously illustrated layman's guide provides photos, descriptions and advice on 65 trees that can work in Midwestern landscapes.

Zanon, who owns LifeServers Inc. and is a member of Upper Arlington's City Tree Commission, spoke with *The Dispatch* about the book.

Q: What led you to write a book on Midwestern landscaping trees?

A: My undergraduate degrees from Ohio State University are in agronomy and horticulture, so I've always had a high interest in plants.

When I was chair of the green committee at Ohio State University's Golf Club, Andy Geiger, Ohio State's athletic director, asked me to chair the restoration of the Scarlet golf course.

We took down a bunch of trees during that process... I wondered what should we put back in, and I realized there were no books or literature on replacement trees. That was the seed that started the whole process.

Q: What's new in this edition?

A: This edition has 65 trees instead of 50... and more information on the emerald ash borer because of the impact it's having in the Midwest.

Q: You've had some success saving an ash in your own yard.

A: I have a huge ash tree — I can't get my arms around it — right in the middle of my patio, and I've had success with it by injecting a product called TREE-age into the trunk.



JIM BROWN

Upper Arlington resident Scott Zanon has updated his book on Midwestern landscaping trees.

So far, it's clean, but my advice is, if you already see something on your tree, don't waste your money on treatment — it's already infected.

You need to be proactive.

Q: You include some elm trees in the book. Can we stop worrying about elm disease?

A: Mainly what Dutch elm disease affects is the American elm. What I've listed are some new selections such as Frontier elm, which are Dutch elm disease-resistant. It doesn't mean they can't be affected, but, so far, they are clean.

Q: It seems as if we've had one tree problem after another. Is there anything on the horizon?

A: The Asian longhorned beetle. That's the one that should scare the hell out of people because it can affect more than a dozen species of trees. That's the one I hope the Ohio Department of Agriculture can contain.

It was found in Clermont County and so far appears contained, but that is a scary one.

There have been several scourges out there, with chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease, now emerald ash borer. That's why it's always important to plant a diverse mix of trees, so you don't have a whole line of trees affected if something comes along.

Q: What other advice do you have for choosing trees?

A: Keep an open mind, No. 1. If you're out taking a walk, in parks or somewhere, and see trees you like, try to take note of what they are.

If folks want to see trees, Dawes Arboretum is a terrific place... and the Chadwick Arboretum (& Learning Gardens). We're very fortunate to have both within driving distance.

Another important thing: You've got to have the right tree for the right space. Consider the mature size of the tree, what it's going to look like in 20 or 30 years. That is paramount in making a decision.

Q: What trees deserve to be better-known and used?

A: One would be the Persian parrotia. That to me is one great, underrated, four-season tree that should be more readily available.

Q: Any others?

A: For people who like elms, if they want that vase-shaped throwback... some of these newer cultivars (Valley Forge) are certainly good. One is the new Frontier elm; it gets a nice burgundy fall color to it. Another is the Katsuratree; it's a beautiful tree.

Another one that comes to mind is the white fringetree; the flowers in the spring are just amazing, as is the fragrance; it's a neat tree.

On the conifer side, the white fir, or the Concolor fir, is a beautiful tree we could use more here; and a couple of spruce trees, the Serbian and Oriental spruce. Everyone plants Norway and Colorado blue spruces. Those (the Serbian and Oriental) are nice alternatives.

Q: Your book doesn't include some trees that are common in central Ohio such as sycamores, hawthorns or hackberries.

A: People like the bark on sycamores, but they're a huge tree, they are messy, and can get anthracnose.

Hackberries are very versatile, but they get nipple gall. As for hawthorns, I have a Washington hawthorn in my lawn, but they are also disease-prone. If you can tolerate certain things, that's fine, but that's why they aren't on my list.

Q: Should we expect a third edition of the book?

A: Perhaps in five years, if I feel like it, there may be another one.

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