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# Multiple Choice

Multi-stem trees are a strikingly beautiful addition to any garden, and designer Stefano Marinaz suggests ten candidates particularly well suited to the form

**S**culptural and shapely, multi-stem trees owe their good looks to traditional coppicing techniques. When trees are a year or two old, the central stem is removed, encouraging it to shoot the following year. Multi-stems grow more slowly than those with a single trunk, but whether they're evergreen, deciduous, large or small, they will have a bearing on the surrounding planting. "Bulbs, perennials, annuals,

climbers and shrubs will all be influenced by the type of tree you choose," says garden designer Stefano Marinaz. "Think about the conditions you want to create, then select the tree you need." Here he picks ten good multi-stem candidates for year-round interest.

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## 1 *Ginkgo biloba*

A neat growth habit and pretty leaves through summer and autumn makes this a good street tree, and it is widely planted in urban centres. But it also works well in gardens. "It is particularly interesting if grown as a multi-stem specimen," says Stefano. "It's drought tolerant and has beautiful colours in autumn."





## 2 *Amelanchier lamarckii*

This useful tree has many common names, including juneberry and snowy mespilus, both reflecting its attractive attributes. “It’s small, with delicate branches and a see-through aspect,” Stefano observes. “After a show of beautiful spring flowers, its summer berries feed the birds, then its foliage takes on lovely autumn hues.”



## 3 *Cornus kousa* ‘Milky Way’

White bracts borne in late spring and early summer are a highlight of a shrub that offers year-round interest. “This is a great tree for areas of dappled shade, or for soil that really retains moisture,” says Stefano. By summer, the bracts have given way to strawberry-like fruits, while in autumn its leaves turn a fiery shade of red.



## 4 *Pinus sylvestris* ‘Watereri’

A chic addition to minimalist gardens, perhaps with a more contemporary mood. “This is a slow-growing, shrub-like evergreen tree that’s normally wider than it is tall,” Stefano notes. “Grow it in a sunny area of the garden, where it will tolerate dry, sandy soil – it also looks great paired with grasses.”



## 5 *Gymnocladus dioica*

“This valuable tree for bees is drought tolerant and has interesting paripinnate leaves that turn an attractive shade of yellow in autumn,” says Stefano. It has a loose, open-crowned form, and bears dense plumes of flowers followed by long seedpods of coffee-like beans – hence the common name of Kentucky coffee tree.





## 6 *Sorbus aucuparia*

It's hard to miss UK native *Sorbus aucuparia* in autumn when it is smothered in dense clusters of cheerful red berries. "It has a nice growth habit," says Stefano, who also notes the value of its berries to garden wildlife. Its height can range from 5m to 15m and it is best suited to gardens with well-drained soil.





## 7 *Magnolia stellata*

A spring show of delicate starry white flowers is the hallmark of this popular magnolia species. Often naturally quite shrubby, it is a worthy candidate for the multi-stem treatment, which renders it very well-suited to a small space. “It’s particularly good for gardens with dappled shade,” Stefano advises.



## 8 *Koelreuteria paniculata*

“This tree is drought tolerant, has beautiful foliage and bears very interesting seedpods from the end of the summer throughout autumn,” says Stefano. Commonly known as pride of India, the tree also bears panicles of small yellow-bronze flowers. Grow it in full sun in moist but well-drained soil.



## 9 *Nothofagus antarctica*

Native to South America and growing as far south as Tierra del Fuego, the southern beech is a small deciduous tree well-suited to the multi-stem treatment. “It has a see-through canopy with small leaves and beautiful yellow colours in autumn. It’s hardy and suitable for most soils,” Stefano explains.



## 10 *Rhus typhina*

This tree bears crimson fruits in autumn and winter. “It tends to send out suckers from the ground, so it is best contained – either in a pot or using a root barrier membrane around the rootball to prevent the tree spreading everywhere,” says Stefano. “It’s particularly interesting for a naturalistic-looking garden.” ■