English walnut  
*Juglans regia*

English walnut (also called “Persian” or “common” walnut), is a large, deciduous tree attaining heights of 40 to 60 feet tall with a 40 to 60-foot spread. Bark is smooth and olive-brown when young, and silvery-grey on older branches. The leaf is comprised of five to nine leaflets, each reaching a length of two to five inches. Leaves are compound and arranged alternately along the stem.

Mature trees may reach 50 feet in height and width and live more than 200 years, developing massive trunks more than eight feet thick.

Originally English walnut was native to the mountain ranges of Central Asia, extending from western China and the mountains of Nepal, Tibet, northern India and Pakistan through Afghanistan to portions of eastern Turkey. Cultivated distribution now includes North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan.

Fairly pest and disease-resistant, English walnut trees bear fruit as early as five to six years after planting. They do not do well in wet areas, but will grow on hillsides or flat ground in rich, deep soil with full sun. Soil must permit rooting to a depth of at least three feet. Other plants will often not grow under them because their fallen leaves and husk contain juglone, a chemical that acts as a natural herbicide. For the colder winter climates east of the Cascades, planting the cold hardy Carpathian varieties such as Idaho, Somers, Ambassador or Champion is recommended.

Thanks to their heart-healthy compounds and antioxidants, walnuts are said to aid in heart protection as well as cancer prevention. Walnut wood is prized by woodworkers for its durability and luster, and is used for guitars, furniture, knobs and handles, and high-end flooring.

Backyard spring cleaning is best defense against spreading neighborhood fire

Most residents of Oregon’s wildland-urban interface will never see a raging wildfire sweep through their neighborhood. But the chief threat to a home comes from above, in the form of flying embers often cast long distances by fire-generated winds. The best defense against this airborne hazard is to remove potential fuel - dead and dying vegetation - from your property.

At this time of year, backyard clean-up should include disposing of winter-killed vegetation left on the ground, and pruning trees. When lower tree limbs are pruned, a ground fire is less likely to climb into a tree and carry flames to the house. In addition to excess fuels caused by dead and dying vegetation, backyard burning is another common cause of severe fires in the urban interface.

*To learn more about ways to protect your home this spring, visit Keep Oregon Green; www.keeporegongreen.com.*

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**Celebrate Oregon Arbor Week (April 7 - 13) this month**

Arbor Day is America’s National Tree Holiday, the day we set aside to plant ceremonial trees, educate children and adults about the importance of trees and their many benefits, and honor the important role trees play in our daily lives.

In Oregon we like to be different, so we set aside an entire week to honor trees; the Oregon State Legislature has decreed that the first full week of April shall be designated as Arbor Week.

**Ways to celebrate Arbor Week with your family?** Take a walk at a local city park, visit a local nursery, read a book about trees, or plant a new tree in your yard or neighborhood. Whatever you do to commemorate Arbor Week this month, remember: trees are worth celebrating! For more info, please visit: www.arborweek.com/page6.php