

Gardening in Spain

Trees are valuable in Spanish gardens

By Clodagh and Dick Handscombe - Gardeners in Spain for 25 years.

Traditionally the Spanish gardens of the rich and the poor from the times of the Romans and Arabs had trees. And the needs continue - windbreaks, shade, security, fruit and nuts, flowers, pollutant absorption, and fire wood. So drifting across Spain on a slow train from Malaga to Valencia we reflect on the landscape and look at each in turn. The next two months are good planting times.



Windbreaks

To the surprise of many people when they first come to Spain it can be a very windy country at all times of the year. From the cold winter blasts that drive down from the north passing over the amazing number of skiing areas that exist in Spain and the hot dusty summer blasts from the south. Many gardens would benefit from trees on at least the normal winter windward side of the house to reduce the heat losses from the house by up to ten percent. Also trees all round a garden will help create the sheltered microclimate essential for many of the smaller plants on sale.

Shade

Wandering around Montemar south of Malaga last week it was good to see that the tall mature trees remembered from visits of forty years ago still exist in the gardens surrounding the villas even though many have been split into apartments. Residents and visitors alike enjoying dappled and deep shade even when swimming in shady swimming pools. Without natural shade one will inevitably retreat to the air conditioning - something one could not purchase twenty five years ago. So we retained most existing trees and planted more and became acclimatised within a couple of years. Some eighty flowering, fruiting, evergreen and varieties of palm trees are described in Part Four of 'Your Garden in Spain - From planning to planting and maintenance'.



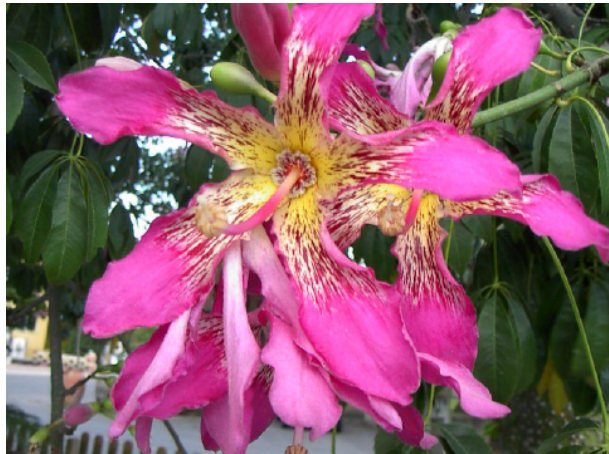
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Security & Privacy

Trees in the hedge and in the centre of the garden help hide the house and garden activities from prying eyes.

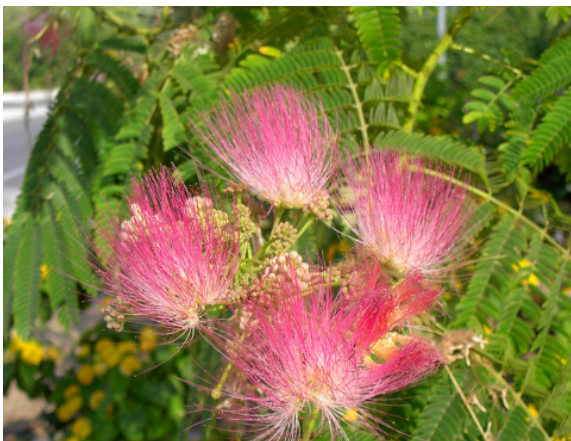
Fruit & Nuts

Fruit and nuts often conger up ideas of an orchard and vineyards but in fact ten fruit trees can be grown in a small garden or on an apartment terrace in just six square metres of space. Use 40 to 50 diameter containers and prune the trees into a columnar shape. Part Two of our book 'Growing Healthy Fruit in Spain' is dedicated to growing fruit on a micro scale and the rest on growing fruit trees within cottage style gardens and dedicated orchard areas.



And some sixty types of fruit trees are described. Some best grown on the coast and some in frosty areas inland. What and where is described within the book. But our first recommendation is always a Lunar lemon tree. It is perpetual flowering and fruiting so there will be few days a year when one cannot find perfumed flowers or a lemon to pick.

Flowers



There are trees that flower during most months of the year. For us the first are the January almond and acacia trees, then the early peach, followed by other fruit trees and the Easter flowering Judas tree. Then summer flowering trees follow in succession. There are twenty seven flowering trees to choose from in Part Four of 'Your Garden in Spain'.

The relative drought and frost resistances being given to help you buy appropriately for inland and coastal situations. Inland possibilities include the acacias, arbutus, magnolia, judas tree, caesalpinia bird of paradise tree, and parkinsonia. Coastal possibilities being the exotic chorisia floss trees, bauhinia orchid trees and jacarandas.

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Pollution Absorption

The green leaves of trees will take in carbon dioxide and absorb other pollutants and lemon and pine trees provide a mild disinfectant effect. Large tree like cacti will absorb a degree of microwaves emitted by electromagnetic devices including mobile phones.

Fire Wood

The winter cut backs will yield some good logs and kindling wood. Olive, carob, acacia and citrus burn the best. Pine and deciduous fruit trees need to be only used on an already hot fire.

So make this spring the year you added trees to the garden so you can live the outdoor life and fresh ecological grown fruit you expected on the Med.

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