



1. Pleached crab apples
My home, Allt-y-bela, in November, where pleached crab apple *Malus* 'Evereste' has been trained on hazel rods to follow the curved boundary of the intimate courtyard against the house. Colourful fruits hang on the branches well into winter.



PHOTOS 1, 2, 4 & 5 BY WILLIAM COLLINSON. PHOTO 3 BY BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

2. Spring blossom
Malus 'Evereste' is one of the most reliable of the crabs, and tends to be resistant to canker. In May it's covered in a mass of white blossom. Choose a large rootstock for vigour.

3. Combined hedge & tunnel
At Ham House in southwest London, this hornbeam tunnel emerges from a yew hedge and leads on to a seat at the far end. It's an inspired idea for a planted screen that combines evergreen cover with the tracery of winter branches.

4. Pleached limes in winter
Ready-pleached trees generally have stems at 2.2m high with a 1.5m-1.7m head. At Guanock, my previous home, I trained limes on a flat plane using hazel rods rather than bamboo canes, because they look more natural and have flexibility.

5. Early spring pruning
I weave the branches in and out of each other like nests to give a deliberately naive effect. Prune limes in early spring; using secateurs, cut back hard to the horizontal stems that form the permanent structure. This keeps branches graceful and narrow.



Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

Pleaching trees and making allées

Chosen and used in the right way, pleached and pollarded trees provide a stylish and space-saving solution for marking pathways, screening views and even supplying you with fruit

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD

6. A topiary allée

I designed this allée for a Norfolk garden, alternating topiary yew with painted posts like heraldic standards. The formality is played down by a soft under-planting of blues and silvers and a light chipping stone path.



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7. A country allée of fruit

The most informal of allées can be under-planted with meadow grass, peonies, a bed of spring bulbs, even old-fashioned roses. At Cranborne Manor, an allée of fruit trees and a mown grass path lead to steps in a bank.



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8. Pollarded limes in spring

New growth emerges in spring on a short allée of pollarded lime trees at Cranborne Manor. The trees are pollarded back to the knuckle each year, while lower branches are trained laterally to form a tunnel.



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9. Quercus ilex domes

This allée of evergreen oak leads to a sculpture. The context called for formality and a limited palette of greens. Nothing is allowed to distract from the rhythmic pattern of shapes and shadows.



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PHOTOS 6, 7 & 8 BY KRISTY RAMAGE; PHOTO 9 BY WILLIAM COLLINSON; PHOTO 10 BY ROWAN ISAAC

Although formally trained trees tend to be associated with grand and formal gardens, their ability to provide screening and structure while occupying little space and casting minimum shade makes them ideal for a wide variety of situations. In a town garden that's overlooked, a row of pleached trees along the boundary will provide a green screen at the level of your neighbours' upper windows and provide privacy without blocking overhead light. Planting a square or oval of pleached trees in the centre of a garden is a beautifully simple way of creating an intimate sitting and dining

area that allows light in and views out. In the tiniest garden nothing more is needed.

On a larger scale, pleached screens can become divisions between different areas of the garden, or be used to hide unwanted views, for instance of parked cars. Conversely, a row of pleached trees can frame and emphasise a particular view.

At Guanock, my previous garden, I planted a double row of limes as a walkway around a lawn. The trees came directly out of a band of limestone chippings, giving the whole a plain, measured, almost 17th-century feel and adding architectural merit by framing the house.



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10. An allée of Turkish hazel

Corylus colurna makes an excellent subject for pleaching and gives a less formal, rugged effect in keeping with the architectural style of this country gate house in Norfolk.

Stockists

Barcham Trees

Very well established supplier of container-grown trees. Barcham Trees, Eye Hill Drove, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5XF. Tel 01353 720950, www.barcham.co.uk

The Romantic Garden Nursery

Specialists in topiary and trained trees. The Street, Swannington, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 5NW. Tel 01603 261488, www.romantic-garden-nursery.co.uk

Planted in double rows, pleached or pollarded trees can form allées, which I'd define as small-scale, informal avenues. I use allées to create routes through a garden; they are usually straight, and should always have a destination, whether that is a door, a seat or a different part of the garden. The choice of trees must match both the scale and the degree of formality or informality that's required. Three or four pairs of pollarded limes make a good short walk to a front door. Pollarded limes, field maples or chestnuts could be used down one side of a country garden, or on both sides to add structure and symmetry to the house, or to frame the view out to the

countryside. Deciduous trees often work best and their twiggy structure creates magical outlines and shadows in winter. Fruit trees also work well: apples, pears and crab apples lend a lovely casual, rustic air as well as providing fruit.

Allées should be quite narrow (3m-3.5m wide) with the trees planted between 2.5m and 4m apart. In a really small garden, a delightful allée can be made of fruit trees trained as goblets, 1.5m-2m high. For damp soils and fast growth, plant an allée of stump willow or alder. With regular pollarding, they will develop fat, gnarled and characterful trunks without ever becoming large trees. □

NEXT TIME Orchards and trained fruit