Most people have seen them. Those plants gasping for life on the tiny green island in the mall parking lot, or struggling along in the highway median. These are tough spots for anything to survive. But surprisingly, a homeowner can end up with some pretty rough growing conditions right in their own yard. Heavy clay soils, fill dirt and debris from new construction, exposed dry western slopes, wet areas, and so on.

If you have a spot with these conditions, not all plants are cut out for the tough life, but some are. There are plants that can survive, even thrive in these spots. Sometimes, they are so tough they seem to be able to grow anywhere, others are tough but need a little extra TLC to get established. The key is to be realistic about the conditions the plant has to grow in, and if you are committed to trying to growing a plant that is ‘delicate’ be prepared to greatly modify the soil it grows in and greatly increase the care given to it.

Below is a list of plants that have proven tough in central Ohio’s heavy soils, alkaline conditions, droughty summers and late spring frosts. Combine this with some advice from our gardening experts to help fill this tough spot!

**SMALL SPECIES 6-25’ HIGH**

- HEDGE MAPLE
- LACEBARK PINE
- TRIDENT MAPLE
- WEEPING CHERRY
- HAWTHORN
- CORNELIAN CHERRY

**MEDIUM TREES 25 - 40’**

- MIYABE MAPLE
- HARDY RUBBER TREE
- COMMON PERSIMMON
- ALDER SP.
- GOLDENRAIN TREE
- BLACK HILLS SPRUCE
- EUROPEAN HORNBEAM
- AMUR MAACHIA
- WEEPING AND UPRIGHT CHERRY

**LARGE TREES 40’ +**

- AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE
- OCTOBER GLORY MAPLE
- PACIFIC SUNSET MAPLE
- KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE
- WHITE SPRUCE
- BALDCYPRESS
- ZELKOVA
- RED MAPLE
- AUTUMN FLAME MAPLE
- GINKGO TREE
- SWEETGUM
- AUSTRIAN PINE
- LACEBARK ELM
- CATALPA
- SIENNA GLEN MAPLE
- NORWEGIAN SUNSET MAPLE
- THORNLESS HONEYLOCUST
- LONDON PLANETREE
- OAKS
- HYBRID ELMS
- SUGAR HACKBERRY