



M'bogo here is considered to be one of the deadliest game animals on the planet. He can stomp and gore you into something unrecognizable except for dental records, but he does not kill nearly as many people as the mosquito. (Wikimedia Commons)

## Dangerous game includes mosquitos

My wife and I are currently making arrangements for a dangerous game safari in Zimbabwe. There is a tremendous amount of paperwork and preparations that must be accomplished for a 21-day trip like this. If you ever decide on a trip like this, be prepared to machete your way through miles of bureaucratic red tape.

In deciding to hunt dangerous game, I have given much thought as to what animal is the most dangerous, as any of the Big 6 can get you a ticket home in the cargo section of the aircraft. Hippos and crocodiles probably kill more people than any of the other animals on the list.

For me, the most dangerous would have to be the cape buffalo. He is not nicknamed the black death because he has a kind disposition. This 2,000-pound wrecking ball looks at you like he already hates you, and many people



### Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

are in graveyards to prove this point. But even the deadly cape buffalo only kills around 200 people a year.

Without a doubt, the deadliest animal in the world, and he is not a member of the Big 6, would be the mosquito. The lowly mosquito, the bug that sucks blood and transmits viruses from human to human, accounts for 830,000 deaths per year. Mosquitoes are responsible for the spread

of the Zika virus, dengue, and yellow fever. The majority of deaths from a disease spread by mosquito's largest killer is from a parasitic infection called malaria.

More than half of the mosquito related malaria deaths occur in Africa, but that number is dropping in recent years due to improved medications and immunizations against the disease. But we are not safe here in Colorado from this creature, as we have our own problems with West Nile and other delightful diseases from this bug.

Scientists have been really busy lately with trying to put a person on Mars and seeing that the planet once had water. If Mars once had water, I am sure they had mosquitoes too. Whenever science quits fooling around with space travel, atoms and molecules, and takes to the business at hand, like getting rid of mosquitoes

and the common cold, we will be getting somewhere.

Apparently, the scientist finally decided to fix a few things here at home for a change. After a decade or more of fighting the government for regulatory approval, a biotechnology firm, called Oxitec, has released genetically engineered mosquitos into the open air in the Florida Keys. For those of you who don't know, Florida has a mosquito problem that dwarfs anything we have ever seen in Colorado.

Oxitec is a firm based in the UK, that has previously field tested these modified mosquitos in Brazil, Grand Cayman and Malaysia. This is intended to be a method for suppressing populations of wild Aedes aegypti mosquitos, which carry Zika, dengue, West Nile and other diseases.

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## Great drought tolerant trees for our area



### Gardening A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

So many people have asked me what trees they should plant to provide shade in the summer, while not requiring a lot of water, which leads me to write this column. And why not?

You're going to see some great sales on trees this fall, and it's a perfect time of year to think about where the hot summer sun may be pounding your deck or a frequently used room in the house. The soil in late summer and fall is warm and the intense summer heat will be decreasing, which helps trees establish well. So why not plan on planting?

I wish I could show you color pictures of all the great trees that you might want to consider planting, but maybe telling you about a few of them will help you do an internet search for information; or, assist you in asking your local garden center.

This reminds me. Our local garden centers carry trees that do well in our area. I'm sorry to say, but some of the big box store selections may not always be a good choice for our area. So keep that in mind when shopping.

There are a few things you should keep in mind when tree hunting. Think about your soil a bit. Will the tree be planted in a high alkali area? How tall will the tree need to be to provide shade to an area you want shaded. Think about the characteristics of the tree. Will the tree be messy? Will it require constant pruning? I think you get the idea.

Let's be clear when we're talking drought tolerant. Drought tolerant doesn't mean the tree won't require watering. This simply means the tree can better withstand periods of drought and may not require as much water as a lot of other trees do. But even these trees are not without pros and cons. For example, Golden Rain Trees are always a favorite of people composing a drought tolerant tree list.

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This is one of five black-footed ferrets released at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area in Larimer County on Nov. 19, 2021. The black-footed ferret is the only ferret species native to North America and was twice thought to be extinct due to habitat loss, widespread poisoning of prairie dog colonies and disease. The new Species Conservation Dashboard will make it easier to track progress being made to protect more than 350 species like the black-footed ferret in Colorado. (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

# CPW dashboard shows agency’s work protecting sensitive species

BY COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

During his presentation on planning and implementation for Colorado’s Species of Concern at the July Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission meeting, CPW Species Conservation Unit Supervisor David Klute presented the Species Conservation Dashboard, a new tool that will show progress being made to protect more than 350 species in Colorado through the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

Colorado’s SWAP documents the status of knowledge about many wildlife species of conservation need, the threats to the species and habitats upon which they depend, and articulates strategies that can be employed to lessen those threats. Tracking all of the efforts toward protecting sensitive species creates a lot of data. Prior to CPW’s Conservation Dashboard, the only way for the public to view information about the plan was to read through

a PDF. The new dashboard is a way to explore the progress being made on more than 350 species and 2,500 conservation actions being taken through four different lenses. Visitors to the dashboard can filter data by:
 

- Individual species
- Groups of species
- Action
- Threat

 Klute’s presentation included a walk-through of the dashboard and identified agency successes (e.g., black-footed ferrets, Gunnison

Sage-grouse), and places where more work was needed (e.g., reptiles). You can view his presentation by going to 2:36 on Day 2 of the Commission meeting posted here. Klute said future iterations of the dashboard would include improvements like spatial information and additional progress and project information from both CPW and conservation partners. The dashboard will be integrated into the 2025 revision of the SWAP.

## MOSQUITOS

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This particular mosquito makes up about 4% of the mosquito population in Florida but is responsible for just about all of the mosquito-borne diseases. The usual method of insect control is to spray everything, from truck and aircraft-based sprayer units, a chemical slurry including Baytex, that kills all the insects in its path. Problem is, this slurry gets into the backwaters and estuaries, and kills fish and other organisms at a wholesale rate, so another method must be found. The technicians released bioengineered male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which don’t bite, to mate with the wild female population, responsible for biting people and transmitting diseases. The genetically engineered males carry a gene that passes to their offspring and kills female progeny in early larval stages. Male offspring won’t die but instead will become carriers of the gene and

pass it to future generations. As more females die, the population of *Aedes aegypti* should die off. Technicians released 12,000 males in April of 2021, and over the course of the summer and early fall, some 20 million will be released. To monitor the progress, researchers are using capture trap devises to measure how far the male mosquitos will travel, how long they live, and how effective they are. Oxitec mosquitos carry a fluorescent marker gene that makes them glow when exposed to a specific color of light, thereby making identification easier. They seem to have thought of everything. Genetically engineered mosquitos are an alternative to insecticides, which are used heavily in the United States to control insect populations. This has resulted in the evolution of mosquitos that are resistant to insecticides, which always results in stronger insecticides, causing even further damage to the environ-

ment and subsequent collateral damages to other species. It is interesting to see this type of scientific progress, but I still remain cautiously skeptical. Hopefully we don’t wind up with some super breed of mosquito, immune to everything, that becomes the new interloper on the playing field. If this works out, there are many possibilities for this science to help in other areas, so stay tuned. In the meantime, limit your outdoor activity during dawn and dusk, because that is when mosquitos are the most active. Keep your property free of standing water, no matter how small of an amount. Old tires, beverage cans and buckets can contain enough water to hatch mosquito eggs. Above all else, keep a good supply of insect repellent handy. Product that contains DEET are the most effective. Look for a concentration of DEET that is 25 percent or greater. The “all natural” or “organic” repellants have never

worked for keeping the biting insects away in my experience, but if you try them, keep a can of DEET handy. Now if science can genetically modify game fish and animals to make my hunting and fishing easier, I am all in. In the meantime, I will try and stay a safe distance from the dangerous game of the Dark Continent, as all the genetic modifications in the world will not help you if old black death decides he wants to punch your ticket. Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff’s Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org)

## TREES

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Rain trees grow relatively quickly, have few disease problems, are drought tolerant, and are eye catching with their little hanging “lanterns” that are green in the summer, turning an eye catching brown in the fall and winter. When a breeze blows the brown little lanterns make a rain sound as the seeds inside the lantern pods rattle. Sounds like a great tree doesn’t it? Here’s the catch though. Those little pods drop and make a big mess! Worse yet, the pods contain seeds that emerge from the fallen pods and sprout almost everywhere they land. But wait. That’s not the worse part. There’s a little black and red insect, called the golden rain tree bug or (red-shoulder bug). That’s because it loves these trees. During the summer you’ll see the black and red bugs around the base of the tree. As fall approaches the insects move to the sides of nearby homes and structures, sometimes in large numbers. And yes. They sometimes go into your house. You can make up your own mind but I think I would pass on these trees.

Aspen are a favorite native tree but native doesn’t always mean drought tolerant. Let’s face it. They’re native to the mountains and are not fond of the heat and soil in the Montrose area and they do not like drought! They may do well for a few years, but they usually won’t survive more than about 13 years at lower elevation.

So what trees do I like? I guess my favorite trees would be the oaks! They’re a bit slow growing, but trees that grow quickly usually have more insect and disease problems and will die quickly. Bur oak is an awesome tree that can grow over 60 feet tall. All oaks are drought resistant, relatively tolerant of alkali soils, can withstand cold winter temperatures, and are good for wildlife. Chinkapan oaks were selected as the 2009 Urban Tree of the Year by the Society of Municipal Arborists. They’re definitely worth checking out.

Hackberry trees are also drought resistant, great for wildlife, and reach a height of about 35 feet. However, they are sure to get little insects that make galls or bumps on the leaves that may make the tree a little ugly when viewed up close, but they’re still a good tree. Kentucky coffeetree is a good choice for drought tolerance. They don’t mind alkali soils, and reach a height of 60 feet. Sorry, they don’t produce coffee beans but the female trees do produce seeds that can be messy. This would be a great tree for a large open area.

Japanese Pagoda-tree is a showy tree reaching heights of about 65 feet with a big round crown. It produces creamy white, pea-like long

hanging clusters of flowers. The ½ inch long flowers appear in midsummer turning into a yellow-green legume becoming light brown at maturity. They end up looking like a 3 to 8 inch long string of pearls that persists all winter. They are toxic to people though so be forewarned! They take quite a few years to produce flowers and do best in full sun with plenty of room to grow. They can be a bit brittle which may be a problem if we get a heavy snow or a lot of wind.

Turkish filbert is a great drought tolerant tree once it becomes established. This 40-50 foot tall tree produces filbert nuts and is relatively insect and disease resistant.

Amur corktree, as you probably have guessed, has interesting corky bark and reaches a height of about 30-45 feet. Fruit on female trees can be messy so make sure you know what you’re getting.

American linden is a great large tree! It grows 70 to 80 feet tall and matures in 90 to 140 years. The heart shaped leaves are yellow to orange in the fall and can provide calcium, magnesium, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium when worked into the soil.

Horse-chestnut is another great tree that I need to tell you about. I know it’s common in the midwest, but who would have thought it would do well here? It will actually adapt to our conditions. This great tree has showy creamy white upright flower clusters that are 5 to 8 inches long that age to a dull red. The tree grows fast the first few years, and then slows down before reaching a height of about 40-60 feet. I think it’s a real show stopper. Unfortunately the nuts are not edible and are considered mildly toxic, but they can be used for herbal medicines if you know what you’re doing.

Tatarian maples, Hot Wings, are a small drought tolerant tree reaching about 15 to 18 feet tall. They’re a relatively new tree to the area but people are discovering how great looking they are and I’m starting to see them all around town. Their little bright red hot wing seeds are showy in late July into early August and provide a great pop of color to the landscape when most plants are looking a bit hot, tired, and drab. Oh, and it’s also a Plant Select® tree which makes it a proven good choice for the area.

You may want to look into an Ohio buckeye, Western catalpa, Black walnut, American plum, Hoptree, Upright Junipers, Bristlecone pine, Mugo pine, Southwestern White pine, and Limber pine.

Thomas Fuller once said, “He that plants trees loves others besides himself” So go love others and plant a great tree!

Linda Corwine McIntosh is an ISA-certified arborist, licensed commercial pesticide applicator and advanced master gardener.



People are discovering how pretty this Tatarian Hot Wings maple can be when other plants in the landscape look hot and tired. (Linda Corwine McIntosh/Special to the MDP)