

## Native Woody Plant List

It would take a tome to mention all the wonderful native trees and shrubs available for us to grow in our gardens. So let's take a look at a few to encourage you to begin your own search. Perhaps the easiest way to approach this is alphabetically. And my definition of "native" are those plants that occur naturally in the United States, nothing imported. But there are some fine hybrids and varieties well worth looking into.

The world has an abundance of Maples, mostly Japanese. But there are some very attractive species to be found in American woods and forests. Especially those of the southeast.

Acer pennsylvanicum – Striped Maple or Goosefoot Maple named for the large stylized leaves, that turn yellow in fall. It's a small understory Maple to about 20' -30', well suited to the transition zone. It's most striking feature is the bright green bark decorated with yellow stripes. Needs a humusy moisture retentive soil.

Aesculus There are several garden-worthy Buckeyes or Horse chestnuts - A favorite is the Bottlebrush Buckeye - A. parviflora, with eye-catching spires of white flowers in late spring & early summer. These are approximately 8" - 12" long and held above bold lobed foliage that turns golden yellow in the fall. It is a clump forming shrub that makes an ideal understory plant or for the transition zone area. But they will tolerate morning sun. (If you are familiar with Valley Road in Abingdon, the best clump I know of is to the left of the Library). Another Buckeye I love as do the hummingbirds is the Red Buckeye - A. pavia. Another handsome understory woodlander that does well in part sun. It's usually a single stemmed small tree to about 15' or so. With bold, upright plumes of scarlet flowers in spring, = Hummingbirds!

Next is Amelanchier - Shad, Shadblow, Serviceberry to name a few of its many common names - A great favorite with several species and varieties. They have an attractive growth habit, forming a low growing multi-stemmed tree with bronzy opening foliage in spring that accompanies the multitude of white flowers. The foliage matures to a soft greyish green, golden yellow in fall. When panicles of red berries form, that are much loved by birds and people. (Read Robin Ward Kimmerer's book "The Serviceberry"). In my garden they are all for the birds!

Aronia birds also love the fruit of these two Chokeberries -that range in height from 6'-8'. They have spring-time clusters of white flowers followed by ornamental fruit that in Aronia arbutifolia, are clusters of red berries. Grow the variety "Brillantissima" for its vibrant foliage color. The black species, A. melanocarpa has black berries. Both have scarlet fall foliage.

Betula - Birches. All are good small understory trees in the wild, but if grown in good, rich, moisture retentive soils they will tolerate some sun. My personal favorite which does not seem to be well known is the River Birch. B. nigra, with lovely cinnamon exfoliating bark. Look for the form Heritage.

Callicarpa americana – American Beautyberry. The small clusters of flowers on this 5' – 6' shrub are tucked into the leaf axils. But the main feature is the heavy fall display of amethyst berries. Much appreciated by humans and birds alike. Light shade to full sun. There is also a better known, more readily available Japanese species – bodinieri.

Calycanthus floridus - Carolina Allspice. A wonderful multi-stemmed shrub approximately 6'-8' tall. Attractive mid green leaves offset the deliciously fragrant maroon flowers that form in the leaf axils in spring. Look for the form Athens that has yellowish green flowers. Sun to light shade

Carpinus caroliniana – American Hornbeam. Growing to around 35' and developing a handsome rounded growth habit, which is a plus in the winter landscape. Typically an understory tree in the wild.

Carya ovata – Shagbark Hickory – A well-known and liked tall tree. Apparently the curled bark is a favorite home for bats, just another reason to grow this lovely tree. Especially if you are looking for shade or a noteworthy specimen.

Cercis canadensis - Redbud No need to mention this outstanding native woodland tree, it's such a favorite. Except to recommend the white flowered form and the striking glossy purple foliage variety called Forest Pansy.

Chionanthus virginicus - Fringetree - Lovely when its fragrant streamer-like flowers cover this multi-stemmed 12' - 18' tree. It just lights up the landscape. And produces black berries in the fall when the attractive foliage turns a soft yellow. Grow in full sun to light or partial shade.

Cladrastis kentuckea/lutea - Yellowwood -. For me just the loveliest flowering tree. Wisteria-like fragrant white panicle of flowers cascade from this beautifully native tree May-time. It will grow from 30'-50', with golden fall foliage'. Should be given a prominent place!

Clethra alnifolia - Sweet pepper Bush -. A bushy multi-stemmed shrub best in full sun. 4"-6" panicle of small white flowers fill the summer garden with fragrance. Yellow foliage in fall is another attractive aspect of this great native shrub. C. acuminata - Mountain Pepperbush, has a longer bloom period and rich cinnamon bark. While it's tolerant of heavy shade it will flower and grow better in a lighter situation. Approximately 5'-7' tall.

Cornus – Dogwood - just to mention a couple of little known ones that are great assets in a sunny garden. Pagoda Dogwood, C. alternifolia can be a single stemmed small tree around 15' or a multi-stemmed shrub. In spring flat clusters of small creamy white flowers cover the horizontal branches. Then in fall the leaves turn red accentuating the black fruit. Also consider the small little known shrubby Dogwoods grown mostly for their vibrant stem colors. C. sanguinea - Bloodtwig Dogwood - Midwinter Beauty and Winter Beauty, also C. flaviramea with bright green stems. Then there is C. sericea - Redosier Dogwood. Of which

Cardinal is one of the most with sort after, with its striking scarlet bark. All will grow in full sun to light shade and prefer moisture retentive soils. C. sericea Silver and Gold, a stoloniferous variety to about 5'-6' has yellow stems and creamy white variegated leaves. Prefers sun but is shade tolerant.

Cotinus obovatus - American Smoketree - This is an eye-catching relative to the Chinese Smokebush we are all probably familiar with. The tree has sumptuous blue-green foliage, that can be yellow, orange or red in the fall. Purple plumes of fluffy flowers similar to its well-known Chinese cousin are another asset. Seems to prefer light shade and transition zones situations. Grows 20'-25'.

Crataegus viridis - 'Winter King Hawthorne' - a small tree to 15'-20', for a prominent sunny spot where the lush dark green leaves will offset the clusters of white flowers that form into brilliant red berries that last through the winter.

Fothergilla - Another wonderful native shrub with highly scented flowers during summer and rich red fall foliage. Full sun to light shade. Good for that transition zones, in a humus rich moisture retentive soil. F. gardenii grows 2'-3' while F. major can get to 6' or more feet. There are some excellent named varieties.

Gymnocladus dioica - Kentucky Coffeetree - desirable for its flowering white panicles in spring 6"-10" long, and very decorative lobed, greyish blue-green foliage. The heavily ridged bark is another attractive feature. Best in humusy, moisture retentive soils. But is surprisingly tolerant of harsher conditions.

Halesia - Silverbell - There are two beautiful species. Easiest to find is Carolina Silverbell, H. carolina a small low branched tree, that covers itself in spring with pristine pendulant white bells just before the leaves expand. Needs a moisture retentive soil in sun or high shade. H. diptera 'Magnicia' is more upright and covers itself in pristine white flowers a few weeks later. Spectacular and a great favorite.

Hamamelis - Witch-hazel There are two noteworthy native species. The Vernal Witch-hazel - H. vernalis, flowering as early as January and continues for several months. Then in the fall the Common Witch-hazel - H. virginiana covers itself in fragrant flowers alongside the yellow foliage. Both are shade loving shrubs which have been hybridized with their Chinese cousins to provide a wealth of varieties to choose from, with a range of flower and foliage colors

Hydrangeas - An overwhelming numbers of species and varieties, primarily Chinese. But my favorite is the American Oakleaf - H. quercifolia. Its cinnamon exfoliating bark and large scalloped leaves are striking on their own and are dusted in fine white hairs. The large dramatic panicles of flowers form at the end of the branches. In fall the distinctive leaves turn scarlet. Look for the variety 'Snow Queen' which is compact and very full. One of the best flowering shrubs for shade and the transition zone. About 5'-6' in height depending on the variety

Ilex - Hollies - There are a number of excellent evergreen native Holly species to check into. But all too often overlooked are the native ones that are well worth growing in full sun to light shade. Inkberry - I. glabra, is dense and shrubby with dark lustrous small evergreen leaves and black berries. There are several good varieties available which are more compact growing. Then there is Winterberry I. verticillata. A striking plant for its abundance of red berries from fall through the winter. It also has some good named variety. Then there is I. dedcdua the Possumhaw. A deciduous heavily fruiting variety that grows in the range of 8'-12'. Best in full sun.

Illicium floridanum - Anise Tree. This shade lover has broad aromatic evergreen leaves and unusual maroon flowers in spring. Likes humus rich soils.

Itea virginica - Sweetspire A little known treasure enjoyed for its long cascading stems of fragrant white flowers in late spring - early summer and fall color. A shrub to about 5' for sun or light shade. Can be used as a hedge.

Leucothoe fontanesiana - Doghobble. A familiar arching evergreen shrub, seen along trails in the woods. It's Pieris-like hanging panicles of white flowers are very ornamental. A lovely relative is L. axillaris - The Coast Leucotho. With broad evergreen foliage that turns a bronzy color in fall and panicles of more upright white flowers. Growing approximately a compact 4'.

A very attractive Leucothoe now called Agarista populifolia - Florida Leucothoe - has gracefully branching stem to 7' plus with typical Leucothoe flowers and more refined glossy foliage in May-June

Lindera benzoin - Spicebush - A favorite for its prolific early spring clusters of small spicy smelling yellow flowers. These are followed by pretty light green foliage. Then in late summer and fall a multitude of eye-catching scarlet berries adorn this unknown treasure. I'm told they are much loved by bears! All part of this small shrub that prefers moist even wet soils are fragrant.

Liquidambar - Sweetgum - It fine tree with a number of interesting varieties. At least one of which does not produce the large prickly fruit that can be hazardous. Wonderful fall color to the star shaped leaves.

Liriodendron tulipifera - Tuliptree. If you are looking for a beautiful, tall, bold tree this is the one. Unique truncated leaves that become a soft yellow in fall and prominent unique flowers in spring, which look elegant in a bowl.

Magnolias. Several native species that are interesting, tall, robust, shade trees. My favorite is Sweetbay - M. Virginia just 10'- 15', with evergreen foliage and large fragrant, creamy-white flowers, that fill the garden with their sweet fragrance in late spring early summer. Best in a moisture retentive to wet location in a protected site to shelter the foliage from winds. There are literally several hundred named hybrids and varieties from the mostly from

the Chinese species and occasionally our native ones. Look up *M. acuminata* – Cucumber Magnolia, with high ornamental clusters of red seed heads and large flowers. *M. fraseri*.

*Neviusia alabamensis*\* – Alabama Snow Wreath. In spring the long arching stems are covered with delicate puff balls of stamen appearing like flowers, but no petals are produced. It's very decorative and a cheerful addition to the spring woodland garden. But will grow in sun in humusy moisture retentive soils. \*Note: This plant is on the federal endangered species list.

*Nyssa sylvatica*- Black Gum. A large tree grown mostly for its striking fall color, plentiful fruit that is a wildlife magnet and lovely shape.

*Oxydendron arboreum* – Sourwood. Long a favorite for its tall narrow, graceful growth habit, long panicles of fragrant white flowers in mid-summer and brilliant fall color. Slow growing to approximately 40' Full sun to light shade and a moisture retentive humusy soil.

*Quercus* – Just so many lovely Oaks as large specimens and shade trees. Do look into to them as it's a diverse group.

Native Roses worth checking out as they are tough, long lived additions to the sun garden with attractive flowers and plenty of hips. *Carolina*, *palustris* and *virginiana*

*Rubus odorata* – Flowering Raspberry. Ideal for the transition zone or sun. Stoloniferous and can be used as a deciduous hedge. In mid to late spring 2" raspberry colored flowers speckle amongst the attractive foliage. A great little known shrub

*Sassafras albidum* – Sassafras. Another favorite shade and specimen tree. If left alone it will be stoloniferous. Tall 60' or more with mitten shaped foliage that turns a brilliant scarlet in fall. Along with the cinnamon reddish bark that has deep furrows that just add to its appeal of this striking tree.

*Sorbus americana* - Mt. Ash or Rowan. A lovely small tree to about 10'-25'. With plumes of white flowers, dark green serrated foliage which turns reddish to orange yellow in the fall that accompany large clusters of scarlet fruit much loved by wildlife. They gather around -- ----- Knob on Whitetop and areas at Greyson Highlands.

*Spirea latifolia* and *tomentosa* – Steeplebush. Both attractive, upright shrubs for sunny naturalized areas and informal borders. Growing to 2'-4'. *Latifolia* has terminal plumes of white flowers, while *tomentosa*s are a nice pink. Easy and tolerant of a wide range of soils.

*Stewartia malacodendron* - Silky Stewartia. Does best in a well-drained, humusy understory situation. The highly decorative 4" flowers cover it in June and July. These are white with purple anthers making them even more striking. A handsome, small tree that grows 12'-15' with mottled bark for winter interest.

S. ovata - Mountain Stewartia. Prefers a moist, humusy soil in light shade. Large white flowers with masses of yellow stamens are a treat to see. Foliage turns scarlet in the fall. Both can be challenging to establish and grow well. Attention needs to be given to their cultural requirements, but it's worth the work to have these beautiful small trees in one's garden.

Tilia americana - Linden/Basswood. Another lovely, tall, 60' plus specimen native tree. Fragrant creamy white flowers appear June time. Then in fall the attractive foliage turns yellow.

Vacciniums – Blueberries. Six shrubs in various heights and two ground cover species. All handsome plants that are covered in bell-shaped flowers in spring, have good growth habits and fruit that we are very familiar with and brilliant fall foliage color. Highbush Blueberry – V. corymbosum develops into a lovely highly ornamental shrub in a garden situation rather than a row grown just for fruit. Checks these out as components for a sunny garden, with humusy acid soils!

Then there are The Viburnums – A wonderful diverse Genus of native and non-native shrubs. Do investigate them for plant shape and size, an array of flower types, some fragrant and most producing berries in a variety of sizes and colors. These develop in late summer onwards and are an important winter food source for birds. In addition to all these desirable characteristics most have wonderful fall color. And a couple of species are evergreen.

A few for starters:-

acerifolium-Mapleleaf; cassinoides-Witherod; dentatum-Arrowwood; dilatatum-Linden; lantana-Wayfaringtree; nudum - Smooth Witherod. The variety Winterthur is outstanding; pruniifolium-Blackhaw; rufidulum – Southern Black; trilobum-American Cranberry.

And to end with just a couple of evergreens to think about.

Abies concolor – Colorado Fir

Calocedrus decurrens – Incense Cedar

Cupressus arizonica – Arizona Cypress, especially 'Blue Ice' & 'Sapphire Skies'

Pinus strobus – White Pine

Thuja – American Arborvitae

And of course I have not mentioned Rhododendrons or Azaleas. A wonderful diverse and highly garden worth group that needs its and own space.

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