

Native Trees for our Local Community

The Importance of Native Plant Species in Our Landscapes

As native habitat is developed and our suburbs expand and sprawl, the food and shelter that were once abundant for our wildlife shrink. The American Audubon society estimates that our native bird population has decreased 30% since 1966. When we think of birds and wildlife, we often forget that insects are a critical food source. As we develop land and plant non-native plants in our suburbs, we change the habitat that supports the insects that support the birds, etc.

Although insects can take pollen and nectar from almost any flowering source, what we forget is that the larval stage of those insects rely on leaves. Insects have evolved as specialist feeders. They have evolved to eat specific plants. Planting native trees and shrubs helps ensure that our insect populations have a stable food source that in turn feeds our birds.

A chickadee needs 350-500 caterpillars a day to raise a clutch of nestlings. It takes 16-18 days to raise a clutch. That is 6000-9000 caterpillars to raise a nest full of babies to maturity.

As with any plant list, we remind you to look up the specific needs and habit of all plants to determine how that will work in your landscape BEFORE you buy. Visit our Resources page for info and links to specific resources.

Native Plant Species for NJ and MidAtlantic Region - Large trees

American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)

Also called White, Red, or Ridge Beech, this large, deciduous tree typically grows 50 to 80 feet tall with a dense, rounded crown. Its foliage turns golden bronze in the fall, and its flowers become triangular nuts enclosed by spiny bracts that ripen in the fall months. American Beech is resistant to browsing by deer, and grows best in partial shade and moist, rich, well-drained soils.



American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*)

This plant also goes by Eastern Sycamore, American Plane Tree, Buttonwood, and Buttonball Tree. A deciduous, perennial tree with a large trunk and wide-reaching canopy, it grows 75 to 100 feet tall and produces large, maple-shaped leaves and globular fruit. It grows in full sun to shade, and in moist, sandy loams or silty clays. This tree is deer resistant and attracts birds especially for shelter.

Ash-Leaf Maple (*Acer negundo*)

This fast-growing and fairly short-lived perennial tree, also known as Box Elder, reaches 80 feet in height. It often has several trunks and can form thickets that grow greenish yellow leaves with a March to April bloom time. This tree grows in full sun, in medium to wet soil, and produces winged seeds that birds and squirrels feed on. It tolerates a variety of soils including dry and clay soil but is intolerant to shade.



Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)

This deciduous, perennial tree reaches 60 to 100 feet in height and 1 to 4 feet in diameter with a long trunk and oblong crown. It produces small, white flowers in the spring and purple-black fruit in the summer. It grows best in moist, well-drained soils, in full sun to partial shade.

Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*)

Black Oak, also known as Yellow, Smoothbark, or Yellowbark Oak, is a medium to large deciduous tree, growing to around 80 feet tall and producing catkins and acorns. The leaves are shiny green above and pale green below and turn red or orange in the fall. It can grow in full sun to partial shade, and in soils that range from dry and sandy to moist and rich. This tree is distinguishable by its yellow to orange inner bark, which was once used as a dye for cloth.



Black Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)

Also known as Tupelo, Sourgum, and Pepperidge, this is a pyramidal, deciduous tree that grows 30 to 50 feet tall, and occasionally to 90 feet. It produces glossy foliage and small, greenish-white flowers on long stalks in the spring, as well as small, blue berries that are very popular with fruit-eating birds and mammals. This slow-growing species is very adaptable, tolerating many conditions and habitats, but preferring moist, acid soils.

Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)

This is a large, rugged, deciduous tree reaching 75 to 100 feet in height, with dark furrowed bark and wide-spreading branches. The well-formed trunk is usually devoid of branches a considerable distance from the ground. Yellow-green leaflets emerge in late spring and turn clear yellow in the fall, and the fruit is a hard-shelled furrowed nut enclosed in a green husk. This tree grows best in full sun and moist, rich, well-drained soil. The falling nuts can be problematic, so best not planted near a home. Black walnut also produces jugalone, a chemical that discourages most plants from growing underneath it.



Chestnut Oak (*Quercus montana*)

This tree also goes by Rock Chestnut Oak, Mountain Chestnut Oak, Rock Oak, and Tanbark Oak. A deciduous, perennial tree that grows 65 to 145 feet tall, it has reddish-brown to dark gray bark and a broad, open crown. Chestnut Oaks produce shiny, light green leaves and chestnut-brown acorns that act as a food source to birds, deer, and small mammals. Chestnut Oak grows in partial shade and in dry loamy, sandy, and rocky soils.

Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

Also called Weymouth Pine, this large, perennial evergreen grows to 120 feet tall. The crown is full and spreading, and the trunk is generally branchless for over half its height. The trunk bark on young trees is thin, smooth, and gray-green in color, later becoming thick, red-brown to gray-brown with prominent broad ridges and furrows. It grows in full sun to shade, in dry to moist, well-drained soils.



Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)

A deciduous, perennial oak that typically reaches 75 to 100 feet in height, this tree has a rounded, often irregular crown. It has dark, lustrous green leaves that turn brownish-red in the fall, during which it also produces small acorns. This oak grows in full sun to partial shade, and in dry to moist, well-drained, loamy soils. It attracts a variety of butterflies, moths, mammals, and birds, including hummingbirds and ground birds.

Northern White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

This large, slow-growing, deciduous tree also goes by the names Stave Oak, Ridge White Oak, and Forked-leaf White Oak, and can reach 80 or even 100 feet in height. It can grow in full sun to shade, in moist, well-drained, sandy and loam soils. White Oak acorns are a valuable source of food for many species of birds. Like all oaks, this species is an important host plant for native butterfly and moth caterpillars--which are themselves popular with migrating and breeding songbirds.



Short-Leaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*)

Also called Southern Yellow, Arkansas, Longtag, or Spruce Pine, is a perennial, evergreen tree with needle-like leaves that occur in bundles of two or three. Its cones are up to 3 inches long, with thin scales and a short prickly. This pine can grow 50 to 100 feet tall and is attractive to birds and small mammals for its seeds, nesting sites, and cover. It does best in partial shade and dry, sandy soils.

Southern Red Oak (*Quercus falcata*)

Southern Red Oak is a medium to large, straight-trunked oak that develops long, spreading branches and can reach 150 feet in height. Its smooth gray bark becomes dark and furrowed and its thin, lobed, deciduous leaves turn reddish-brown in fall. Also known as Bottomland Red Oak, Three-lobed Red Oak, and Spanish Oak, this perennial tree grows quickly in partial shade and in dry, sandy, loamy, or clay soils.



Swamp Chestnut Oak (*Quercus michauxii*)

Also known as Basket Oak and Cow Oak, this perennial, deciduous oak typically reaches 60 to 100 feet in height, with a tight, narrow crown. The bark is light gray with rough, flaky edges, and the leaves turn yellow and red in the fall. This tree attracts a variety of wildlife including butterflies, mammals, and birds for its cover, nesting sites, nuts, and fruit. It grows in partial shade, in moist, deep, rich soils.

Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*)

Swamp White Oak is a large, slow-growing tree that can reach a height of up to 100 feet in partial shade and moist, poorly drained soils. Its leaves are dark, shiny green above and silvery white below, turning yellow in the fall. It produces acorns that mature in early fall and attract mammals and birds.



Sweet-Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)

This 80-foot tall, perennial, deciduous tree is also known as American Sweetgum, Alligator Tree, Satin Walnut, Liquidambar, and Red, White, or Starleaf gum. Its star-shaped leaves have a sweet fragrance when crushed, and in the fall turn a brilliant mixture of yellows, oranges, purples, and reds. The fruit is spiky and woody, ripening from green to brown, and persisting through January. This fast-growing tree flourishes in partial shade and moist loams.

Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Also called Tulip Poplar or Yellow Poplar, this deciduous tree grows 60 to 90 feet tall. Its yellow-orange flowers attract hummingbirds, and are followed by dry, scaly, cone-shaped brown fruits, each bearing numerous winged seeds. It can grow in full sun to shade, and in rich, moist soils. This tree is favored by birds as a nesting site.





Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*)

This medium-sized, deciduous tree also goes by the names Swamp Willow Oak, Pin Oak, and Peach Oak. It can reach 75 or even 100 feet in height, with a cone-shaped crown and leaves that are bright green above, paler beneath, and turn dull gold in the fall. Willow Oak is a popular shade tree, providing nesting sites, cover, and nuts for birds, small mammals, and other wildlife. It grows in partial shade and in moist clay or loamy soils.

Medium trees



American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)

Common names for this plant also include White, Prickly, or Christmas Holly. It is an upright, pyramidal, evergreen tree that slowly matures to a height of 30 feet, sometimes even 60 feet in warmer areas. It is the only native U.S. holly with spiny green leaves and bright red berries. These fruits are poisonous to humans but enjoyed by many bird and mammal species. American Holly can grow in full sun to shade, and in moist, well-drained, sandy and loamy soils.

American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)

Also known as Musclewood, Ironwood, Blue Beech, and Water Beech, this slow-growing, deciduous, understory tree has an attractive globular form, reaching 20 to 35 feet in height. It is easily grown in average, medium moisture soil in partial to full shade, preferring moist, organically rich soils. Mature trees have smooth, gray trunks with furrows that give them a muscle fiber-like appearance, fittingly earning it the nickname, Musclewood.



Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*)

Atlantic White Cedar, also known as Swamp White Cedar and Southern White Cedar, is a narrow, columnar native cypress that thrives in acidic, moist to wet soils in full sun, and is intolerant of drought and windy sites. These hard-to-find evergreens can grow to more than 40 feet tall and are sometimes confused with arborvitae. Its flowers are inconspicuous and the cones are small and round, about ¼ inch in length.

Black Willow (*Salix nigra*)

Also known as Gulf Black Willow or Swamp Willow, this fast-growing, deciduous tree grows 30 to 60 feet tall on single or multiple trunks topped by a spreading, rounded, sometimes irregular crown. Its fall color is variable, normally greenish-yellow. This tree can grow in full sun to partial shade, in moist to wet soils, and is flood and silt resistant. Its dark brown/black bark is soft and often food for deer, rabbits, beavers, and other such browsers. Black Willow is also a larval host to a number of butterfly and moth species.



Blackjack Oak (*Quercus marilandica*)

This medium-sized oak can grow 30 to 50 feet tall. Also known as Barren Oak or Jack Oak, it has glossy, dark-green foliage that turns red in the fall and persists into winter. Its bark is thick, furrowed, and nearly black, and its oblong acorns are broadly rounded at the apex and base. This tree grows in partial shade, and in a variety of soils, including gravelly, sandy, loamy, and clayey soils.

Cock-Spur Hawthorn (*Crataegus crus-galli*)

This perennial, deciduous tree, also known as Newcastle Hawthorn or Hog Apple, grows 20 to 35 feet tall, with leaves that turn bright orange or red in fall. It produces clusters of white flowers in May and June that are followed by small, red apples. This tree grows in full sun and in moist soil, though it can tolerate a wide variety of soils as long as they are well-drained. It is also tolerant to drought and air pollution. Attracts many birds and small browsers.



Common Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)

This small to medium-sized tree, also called American Persimmon, grows 30 to 60 feet tall. Its bright orange fruit is fully ripe and edible following a frost and is popular with birds such as quail, turkey, grouse and cedar waxwings. Most native trees are either male or female; a male tree must be nearby in order for the female tree to bear fruit. This plant grows best in partial shade, and in moist, rich soils.

Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)

Also known as Canadian Hemlock and Hemlock-Spruce, this tall, perennial, evergreen tree attains a height of 40 to 70 feet (though very old trees may grow much larger) and a spread of 25 to 35 feet. It is more shade-tolerant than many evergreens and bears short, soft needles and pendant, half-inch-long cones. This tree cannot tolerate drought conditions, growing best in cool, moist, rocky soils.



Eastern Hop-Hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*)

This plant goes by many names, including American, Eastern, or Woolly Hop-hornbeam, Roughbark Ironwood, Deerwood, and Leverwood. It is a perennial tree that typically grows 30 to 50 feet in height, with a trunk that looks like sinewy muscles and a rounded crown of slender, spreading branches. Catkins appear in April just before or with the appearance of new leaves, and fruits are borne in a hanging, hop like structure. It prefers shady areas, but can also grow in the sun, and does best in rich, well-drained, dry to moist soils.

Eastern Red-Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Also known as Virginia Juniper, Red Juniper, Pencil Cedar, and Carolina Cedar, this evergreen, fragrant tree varies in color from gray-green to blue-green to light or dark green. It grows 30 to 40 feet tall typically, though it can reach up to 90 feet, with soft, silvery bark covering the single trunk. Growing in full sun to shade, and in dry soils, it is the most widely distributed eastern conifer, and is resistant to extremes of drought, heat, and cold. Pale blue fruits on female plants, combined with dense foliage make this plant excellent for birds.



Gray Birch (*Betula populifolia*)

Also known as White Birch and Aspen-leaved Birch, this narrow-columned tree typically grows to 30 to 50 feet tall. Often a pioneer tree in clearings, this perennial grows quickly though is short-lived, and provides shade to seedlings of other forest trees. Its white bark becomes darker as it ages, and its dark green foliage turns yellow in the fall. Gray Birch typically occurs in both dry and wet soils and can withstand full sun to shade.

Pignut Hickory (*Carya Glabra*)

This deciduous tree grows along most of the eastern coast. It can reach 40-60 feet tall with a narrow crown. Also known as Smoothbark Hickory, Swamp Hickory and Broom Hickory. The bark is tight and in fall, golden. It does well in a range of soil types, from rocky and dry to



moist bottomlands. The pear-shaped nuts ripen in September-October, have a sweet maple-like scent and are an important part of the diet for many wild animals.

Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*)

Also called Swamp Spanish Oak, this medium-sized, deciduous tree typically grows 50 to 70 feet tall, with a broad, pyramidal crown. Its glossy, dark green leaves grow to 5 inches long and turn deep red in fall, producing small acorns. A fast-growing oak, it can grow in full sun to shade, in moist to wet soils, including heavy, poorly drained soils.



Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*)

Otherwise known as Torch Pine, this evergreen tree grows 40 to 70 feet tall. It has an irregular form with twisting, gnarled, drooping branches, and scaly, reddish-brown bark which eventually becomes black. Its cones occur in whorls of 3 to 5, while its needles occur in clusters of three, later turning dark-green. Pitch Pine is a hardy tree, resisting injury and fire, and growing in dry, rocky or sandy soils that other trees normally would not tolerate.

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

Also called Scarlet or Soft Maple, this deciduous, perennial tree grows to a height of 40 to 60 feet and a spread of around 40 feet at maturity. It yields twin seeds that are up to one inch in length and provides amazing yellow to bright red fall color. This tree grows best in full sun to partial shade and in moist, slightly acidic soils. It is visited by a variety of wildlife, including birds, moths, and browsers like deer.

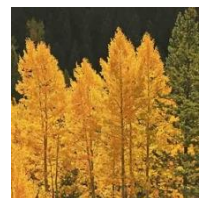


Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*)

The red mulberry is a medium-sized, perennial tree growing up to 60 feet tall, with a short trunk and a broad, rounded crown. It produces catkins that are highly attractive to birds and turn from light green to red and then to black, blooming from March to June. It is adaptable to different conditions, growing in full sun to shade, and in dry to moist sandy, loam, and clay soils. It is not recommended as a tree close to a home as the fruits from the female tree can be messy. (Note: Differs from the White Mulberry, which is non-native and is cross breeding with the native species).

Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)

This small to medium-sized, deciduous, perennial tree also goes by the names Trembling Poplar, and Golden, Trembling, or Mountain Aspen. It can reach 30 to 50 feet in height, with smooth, white bark. The tree grows silvery catkins before the leaves appear, and the foliage turns a bright yellow in the fall. It grows in full sun to shade, and is common along streams and wetlands, or on cool slopes with moist soils.



River Birch (*Betula nigra*)

River Birch, also known as Red, Black, or Water Birch, is a vigorous, fast-growing tree that naturally occurs on floodplains, swampy bottomlands, and along streams. Typically growing 40 to 70 feet tall, it is one of the most disease-free birches, with an irregular crown and silver bark that peels to uncover a cinnamon-brown trunk underneath. River Birch grows in partial shade and moist, sandy soils.

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)

Other names for this plant include White Sassafras, Ague Tree, Cinnamon Wood, Mitten Tree, Saloop, and Smelling Stick. This medium-sized, aromatic tree grows 35 to 50 feet tall with three different leaf shapes that have outstanding fall color. Clusters of yellow-green flower balls appear all over the female tree and more sparsely on the male, with dark blue fruits on scarlet stalks appearing on female plants in late summer. Sassafras grows in full sun to shade, and in moist, rich, sandy loams.



Shag-Bark Hickory (*Carya ovata*)

This medium-sized tree is also known as Shagbark, Carolina, Scalybark, Upland, or Shellbark Hickory. It is a deciduous, perennial tree averaging 70 to 80 feet in height, and 12 to 24 inches in diameter. It is probably the most distinctive of all the hickories because of its loose-plated bark. This tree produces thick-shelled, edible nuts, and its foliage turns golden in early fall. It grows in full sun to shade, preferring dry to moist, well-drained, fertile soils.

Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*)

Virginia Pine, otherwise known as Jersey or Scrub Pine, is a medium size evergreen tree that grows 15 to 40 feet tall. It grows from a single, round trunk and has an irregular crown of long, spreading, ascending to descending branches. The young bark is smooth, aging to thick, shaggy, and gray-brown. This tree can grow in poor, well-drained soils, and requires full sun.



Small trees



Pagoda Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)

Also known as Alternative-Leaf Dogwood, this small, perennial, deciduous tree or large multi-stemmed shrub typically grows 15 to 25 feet tall with distinctive layered horizontal branching. Its flowers give way to bluish-black fruits on red stalks that mature during late summer. This plant grows in partial shade, and in cool, moist, acidic, well-drained soils, though it can tolerate poor soils and clay. Offers fruit, butterfly and caterpillar habitat.

Attracts bluebirds, catbirds, flickers, grosbeaks, mockingbirds, robins, tanagers, thrushes, vireos, waxwings, woodpeckers, etc.

American Basswood (*Tilia americana*)

This is a perennial, deciduous, and multi-stemmed shrub that typically grows 8 to 16 feet tall, and naturally occurs in dry or moist thickets. It thrives in full sun to partial shade, and in dry to moist soil, with a medium water requirement. This plant grows yellowish-brown catkins that appear in late winter and early spring, its leaves turning various colors from bright yellow to wine-red in the fall. Offers fruit, nuts, butterfly and caterpillar habitat.



American Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)

This is a perennial, deciduous, and multi-stemmed shrub that typically grows 8 to 16 feet tall, and naturally occurs in dry or moist thickets. It thrives in full sun to partial shade, and in dry to moist soil, with a medium water requirement. This plant grows yellowish-brown catkins that appear in late winter and early spring, its leaves turning various colors from bright yellow to wine-red in the fall.

American Witch-Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Also known as Common Witch-Hazel, Snapping Hazelnut, Striped or Spotted Alder, and Winterbloom, this perennial, fall-blooming, deciduous shrub or small tree grows 15 to 20 feet tall. It grows in full sun and partial shade, in dry to moist soil, but prefers rich, acidic, well-drained soil. American Witch-Hazel produces fragrant, yellow flowers with petals that resemble crumpled strips from October to December and greenish seed capsules that mature to light brown.



Canadian Service-Berry (*Amelanchier canadensis*)

Also called Shadbush and Juneberry, this shrub-like, perennial tree is relatively small, blooming white flowers and red, apple-like fruits in June. Like all native species of *Amelanchier*, this plant is popular with fruit-eating birds. It grows 6 to 20 feet tall in moist, well-drained soils, and in full sun to partial shade. Attracts bluebirds, flycatchers, catbirds, jays, mockingbirds, orioles, tanagers, thrashers, thrushes and waxwings.

Downy Service-Berry (*Amelanchier arborea*)

This perennial, deciduous, shrub-like tree is also known as Shadbush, Juneberry, Junebush, and Shadblow. It grows 15 to 25 feet tall in full to sun to shade, and in moist, well-drained soils. In June, Downy Service-Berry bears white spring flowers, followed by sweet, reddish-purple berries that are popular with fruit-eating birds, as are all native species of *Amelanchier*. Attracts bluebirds, flycatchers, catbirds, jays, mockingbirds, orioles, tanagers, thrashers, thrushes and waxwings.



Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

This plant goes by many names, including Virginia or Florida Dogwood, White Cornel, Arrowwood, American Boxwood, False Box, St. Peter's Crown, and Corona de San Pedro. A small, deciduous, perennial tree, it typically grows 15 to 30 feet tall with a low-branching, flat-topped habit. White flowers bloom from spring to fall, while bright red fruits mature in late summer to early fall and may persist until late in the year. It is resistant to browsing by deer, and grows in partial to full shade, and in dry to moist, well-drained soils. Attracts bluebirds, catbirds, flickers, grosbeaks, mockingbirds, robins, tanagers, thrushes, vireos, waxwings, woodpeckers, etc. There is a very good Rutgers-bred hybrid that is anthracnose resistant.

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Redbud, or Eastern Redbud, is an understory shrub or small tree that grows up to 30 feet tall. It often has a short, crooked gray-barked trunk and a wide-spreading, irregular crown of heart-shaped and smooth leaves. The flowers are bright pink while buds become light pink as they bloom in their clusters, transforming during the summer into flattened, brown seedpods. The seedpods can stay on the tree through fall and sometimes into winter. This tree does best in partial shade, and in moist, well-drained, fertile soils. Attracts chickadees, hummingbirds, orioles, titmice, vireos, warblers.



Sweet-Bay (*Magnolia virginiana*)

Also known as Swampbay, Sweet Magnolia, White Laurel, and Beaver Tree, this is a slender tree or shrub with pale grey bark that grows up to 20 feet tall, occasionally taller. Its multiple, upright trunks bear picturesque, horizontal branches that produce spicy-smelling foliage and velvety-white flowers that are followed by dark red fruits. Sweet-Bay grows best in partial shade and in rich, moist soils.

Winged Sumac (*Rhus copallinum*)

Also known as Shining, Flameleaf, Mountain, Dwarf, Wing-rib, Black, or Upland Sumac, this deciduous shrub or small tree grows 11 to 18 feet tall. Its large, compound leaves with dark green leaflets turn flame red in autumn. It also produces tiny, greenish-yellow flowers in late spring to early summer and berry-like clusters in the fall. This ornamental plant spreads widely, growing in full sun, and in dry, rocky, or poor soils. Attracts attracts myriad bird species birds from wrens to game-birds.

