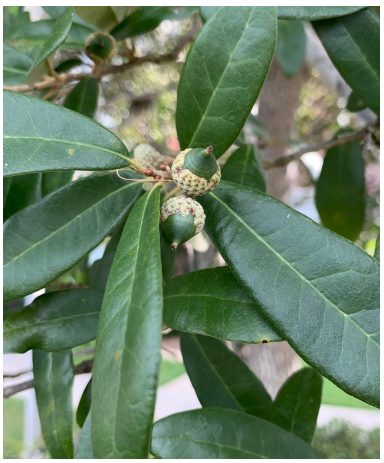
Native Trees of Southeastern NC

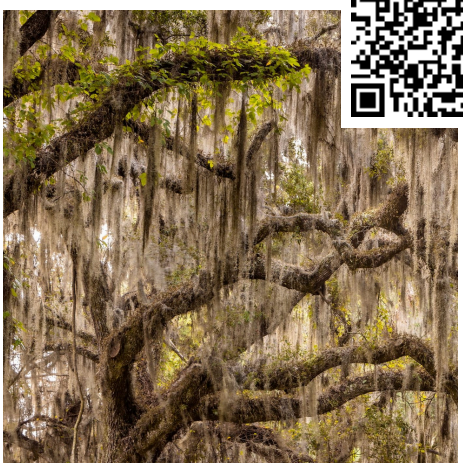
alliance for
CAPE FEAR TREES

OUR MISSION: to preserve, protect, and plant trees to enhance quality of life and health for present and future generations in the Lower Cape Fear area

All of the biodiverse native species featured in this resource have been planted or given away by the Alliance for Cape Fear Trees as part of our efforts to restore and grow the region's canopy.







SOUTHERN LIVE OAK

Quercus virginiana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–80’ tall × 60–100’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Massive, spreading, picturesque
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; drought- and salt-tolerant
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals, insects
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Legacy, shade, habitat, large yards

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first one to two years to encourage strong root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot.*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain strong structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning, and never top.*

WHERE TO PLANT

These giants grow slowly but live for centuries. Plant at least 20–30 feet from structures, driveways, and power lines so your oak has room to spread its iconic canopy.

Pair your live oak with native understory plants like yaupon holly, beautyberry, or wax myrtle. These species thrive in the filtered light beneath canopy trees like oaks!

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

The quintessential southern tree, live oaks are living landmarks. Their sweeping, moss-draped branches create shade havens and iconic beauty.

FUN FACT

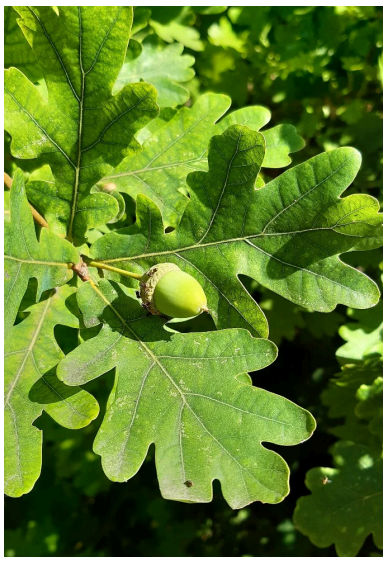
The Southern live oak is unmatched in stormwater and carbon benefits.

One mature tree can intercept and absorb tens of thousands of gallons of stormwater each year, reducing flooding and protecting our waterways.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A single Southern live oak can be home to thousands of organisms—from lichens, mosses, and fungi clinging to its bark to insects, birds, bats, and mammals making use of its branches, leaves, and cavities.

It’s not just a tree; it’s an entire ecosystem.







WHITE OAK

Quercus alba

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 60–80’ tall × 60–80’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, rounded, spreading
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers well-drained soils
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals, insects
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Legacy, shade, habitat, large yards

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first one to two years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot.*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain strong structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning, and never top.*

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

The white oak is a symbol of strength and endurance, living for centuries. Take one home and plant your legacy!

FUN FACT

White oak wood was prized for shipbuilding—including the USS Constitution, “Old Ironsides”—thanks to its strength and resistance to rot.

Its durable lumber has also been essential for barrel-making, imparting distinctive flavor to bourbon and wines.

WHERE TO PLANT

White oaks need plenty of room to grow—best suited for large yards, parks, or open landscapes where their iconic, spreading limbs can fully develop without obstruction.

Prefers deep, well-drained soils. When planting, stay away from compacted or shallow ground. These long-lived giants thrive in locations with good air circulation and plenty of sunlight.







SOUTHERN RED OAK

Quercus falcata

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 60–90’ tall × 50–70’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, open, graceful
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; tolerates drought once established
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate to fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—acorns, habitat
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Legacy, shade, rural, dry soils

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune in winter** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top.*

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This classic Southern oak brings **shade, strength, and seasonal beauty.**

Its lobed, deeply veined leaves turn russet-red in fall, while its tall form adds elegance to any skyline.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Acorns feed countless forest creatures, from blue jays to black bears. The tree also supports moth and butterfly larvae, playing a key role in native food webs!

WHERE TO PLANT

Ideal for upland areas with sandy or clay soils. Avoid low, wet spots.

Southern red oaks need full sun and room to spread, so plant at least **20–30 feet from structures or overhead lines.**

FUN FACT:

*This oak’s scientific name **“falcata”** refers to the sickle-shaped curve of its leaves—just one of many ways this tree stands out in the canopy!*







SCARLET OAK

Quercus coccinea

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous hardwood
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–60’ tall × 20–35’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, rounded
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; drought-tolerant once established
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, habitat restoration, storm resilience

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first year to encourage root growth. Mature trees tolerate drought but benefit from occasional watering in dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2-3" mulch layer** to conserve moisture, stabilize soil temperature, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top!*
- **Plant in full sun** to bring out the best fall color.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This oak lives up to its name—igniting the landscape in fiery reds and deep crimsons each fall.

Known for holding onto its leaves into early winter, this oak flashes color long after other trees have faded!

With a sturdy trunk and sweeping limbs, the scarlet oak brings strength and beauty.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

The scarlet oak is a keystone species. Its acorns feed countless animals, while its canopy supports hundreds of species of moth and butterfly larvae. Just one mature tree can host more than 500 species of caterpillars!

WHERE TO PLANT

An excellent choice for large yards, parks, or campuses!

Avoid planting near sidewalks or driveways due to its taproot and potential for surface roots.







SHUMARD OAK

Quercus shumardii

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 50–70’ tall × 40–50’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, spreading
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; drought-tolerant once established
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate to fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Legacy, fast shade, large yards

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top.*

FUN FACT

Often mistaken for red oak, Shumard is tougher in southern climates—an urban forestry favorite!

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This oak combines resilience with beauty! **It thrives in urban soils and dazzles with crimson fall foliage—rare for oaks.**

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Shumard oaks produce large acorns that are a staple food for woodpeckers and squirrels, especially in fall and winter when other resources are scarce. Their foliage supports hundreds of species of caterpillars, which in turn sustain birds and wildlife!

WHERE TO PLANT

Perfect for large yards! They thrive in open, sunny spaces where their broad crowns can fully develop without crowding nearby structures. *Avoid planting too close to homes, driveways, or narrow strips; give them the space they need to shine as a legacy shade tree!*

They’re remarkably adaptable to clay soils and periodic drought once established.







SWAMP CHESTNUT OAK

Quercus michauxii

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 60–100’ tall × 50–70’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, rounded, stately
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; prefers moist, well-drained soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals, insects
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, wet soils, rural lots, wildlife value

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune in winter** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top.*

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

This oak supports hundreds of native insect species and produces large acorns beloved by wildlife.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This oak is the gentle giant of bottomlands and floodplains.

With glossy leaves and acorns sweet enough to eat (really!), it brings beauty and biodiversity to any large space.

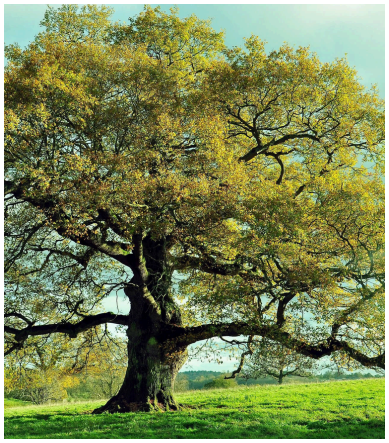
FUN FACT

Its acorns are some of the sweetest among oaks—so much so, early settlers used them to feed livestock (thus the nickname “cow oak”).

WHERE TO PLANT

Swamp chestnut oaks thrive in deep, moist soils but are surprisingly drought-tolerant once established.

Give them plenty of room to grow—best for large yards and open spaces.







OVERCUP OAK

Quercus lyrata

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 45–70’ tall × 35–50’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, uniform
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; tolerates flooding
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals, insects
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, floodplains, wet soils, wildlife

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first one to two years to encourage strong root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot.*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain strong structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning, and never top.*

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Overcup oaks supports wetland wildlife with food and shelter. Strong roots reduce erosion and improve flood resilience, making it ideal for restoring lowland and riparian habitats. Beyond stabilizing soils, the tree’s tolerance for prolonged flooding helps sustain wetland ecosystems.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Adapted to floodplains, this oak can handle “wet feet,” making it ideal for soggy soils and low areas.

Its acorns are almost entirely enclosed by their cups—hence the name “overcup.”

FUN FACT

Because its acorns float, overcup oaks spread naturally via rivers and floodwaters!

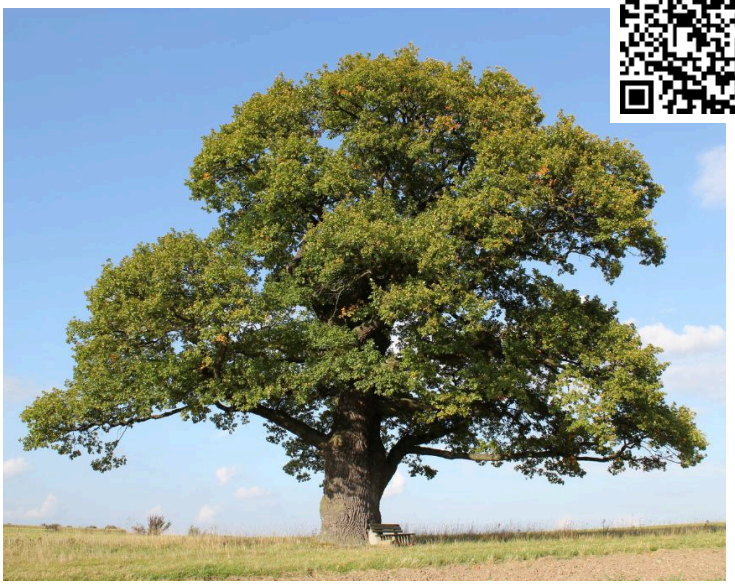
WHERE TO PLANT

Ideal for low, flood-prone areas, stormwater basins, or sites near wetlands and streambanks. Well adapted to wet soils, the overcup oak thrives where many other trees won’t, helping manage runoff and reduce erosion.

It prefers full sun but tolerates partial shade, and is a strong choice for both naturalized and urban landscapes—*just avoid drought-prone sites. that dry out quickly*







SWAMP WHITE OAK

Quercus bicolor

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 50–60’ tall × 50–60’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, open
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; tolerates wet soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes—wetland areas
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, moist soils, large yards

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune in winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches. *Never top!*

FUN FACT

Its acorns are “two-toned”—light cap and darker nut—earning the name “bicolor.”

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This oak thrives where others falter—moist or swampy ground.

Its peeling bark adds character, and its yellow-gold fall foliage is a bonus.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

What a powerhouse! The oak’s acorns provide a reliable food source for squirrels and a wide range of birds, while its leaves host hundreds of caterpillar species that fuel the food web for songbirds.

Adapted to wetter soils, it thrives along floodplains and streambanks where it stabilizes soil, improves water quality, and mitigates flooding through stormwater absorption.

WHERE TO PLANT

Perfect for low-lying or flood-prone yards, swamp white oaks thrive in moist, poorly drained, or clay-heavy soils. *Avoid dry, exposed, or overly sandy sites.*







WILLOW OAK

Quercus phellos

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 60–80’ tall × 40–50’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, rounded
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, acidic soils
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Fast shade, big yards, street tree

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top!*

FUN FACT

Squirrels love willow oaks! Don’t be surprised if you see a few scurrying around when acorns drop.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Beloved in southern cities, willow oaks combine elegance with toughness.

Their narrow, willow-like leaves give a graceful texture, while the tree grows quickly into a broad, cooling canopy.

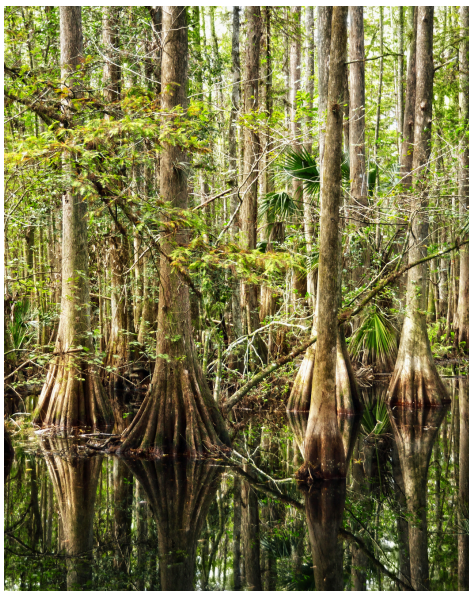
ECOLOGICAL VALUE

The willow oak’s acorns support dozens of bird and mammal species—an especially important food source because their smaller size makes them accessible to a wider range of species.

WHERE TO PLANT

This oak needs room to spread—great for big lawns!

Avoid tight residential spots where roots could crowd infrastructure or sidewalks, as mature trees require ample underground space for their extensive root systems.







BALD CYPRESS

Taxodium distichum

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous conifer
- **Size at Maturity:** 50–70’ tall × 20–30’ wide
  Canopy Style: Pyramidal when young, broadening with age
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; thrives in wet soils, flood-tolerant
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—waterfowl
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Rain gardens, wet sites, stormwater mitigation, wildlife habitat

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune minimally**—focus on removing dead wood.

FUN FACT

Though it looks evergreen, it’s not! The “bald” in bald cypress refers to its **bare winter branches—a rarity among conifers.**

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Bald cypress stands tall and elegant—even in standing water!

Its feathery, fern-like foliage turns russet-orange in fall before dropping, and its buttressed trunk and “knees” add a sculptural flair.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

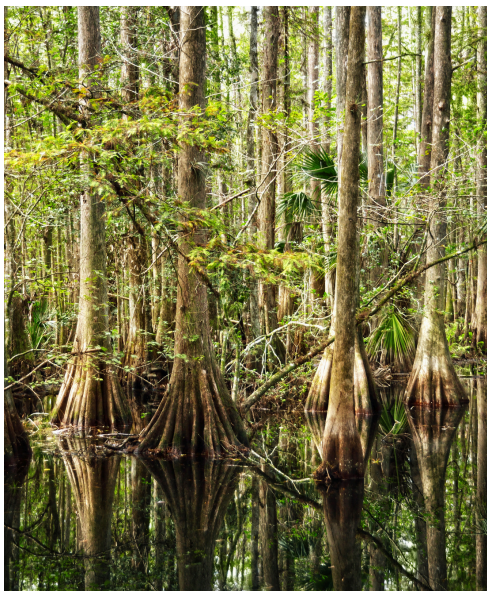
A powerful **stormwater sponge!** Its roots stabilize streambanks and filter pollutants.

Offers nesting for herons and habitat for amphibians in wetland settings.

WHERE TO PLANT

Ideal for low-lying areas, retention ponds, or places that flood periodically. Will grow in average soil but prefers wet feet.

Needs full sun and space to show off its form.







POND CYPRESS

Taxodium distichum var. imbricarium

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous conifer
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–60’ tall × 15–25’ wide
  Canopy Style: More upright and slender; columnar to narrowly pyramidal
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; thrives in wet soils, flood-tolerant
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—waterfowl
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Rain gardens, wet sites, stormwater mitigation, wildlife habitat

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune minimally**—focus on removing dead wood.

FUN FACT

Though it looks evergreen, it’s not! A rarity among conifers, this cypress sports bare winter branches after its needles drop each fall.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Pond cypress stands tall and elegant—even in standing water!

Its fine, scale-like foliage gives it a softer, more delicate texture, and its naturally upright, narrower form makes it a great fit for smaller spaces or tighter planting areas. In fall, it turns a warm russet-orange!

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A powerful stormwater sponge! Its roots stabilize streambanks and filter pollutants.

Offers nesting for herons and habitat for amphibians in wetland settings.

WHERE TO PLANT

Ideal for low-lying areas, retention ponds, or places that flood periodically. Will grow in average soil but prefers wet feet.

Needs full sun and space to show off its form.






ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR

Chamaecyparis thyoides

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen conifer
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–60’ tall × 10–20’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Upright, narrow, conical
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** High—prefers wet soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, small mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Rain gardens, naturalized plantings, wetland restoration

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 2 years—especially during dry spells—to encourage root growth. Don’t let it dry out!
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- **Avoid pruning unless removing damaged limbs.**

FUN FACT

This cedar’s wood is so rot-resistant that it was once the go-to material for building boats, shingles, and even water pipes. This tree once formed vast wetland forests—so valuable, they were heavily logged for centuries. **Today, conservationists are working to reestablish the species in its native wetlands.**

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Elegant and evergreen, the Atlantic white cedar brings **year-round color and graceful form** to your landscape.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

An anchor of wetland ecosystems, this tree supports biodiversity by providing critical habitat for birds and small mammals. Its roots stabilize soils and improve water quality.

This native conifer once dominated North Carolina’s swamps! **Restoration of this species helps combat the loss of wetland forests in our region.**

WHERE TO PLANT

Atlantic white cedar thrives in consistently moist to wet soils— perfect for low-lying or wet areas, rain gardens, or near stormwater features. Works well in naturalized spaces where it can grow tall and proud.

Best for properties with room to stretch—this tree isn’t suited for tight urban lots!







EASTERN RED CEDAR

Juniperus virginiana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen conifer
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–50’ tall × 8–20’ wide
  Canopy Style: Narrow, pyramidal to columnar
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Low—very drought-tolerant once established
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators, small mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Privacy screen, windbreak, erosion control, habitat restoration

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1x/week)** during the first year to encourage root growth.
- **Tolerates poor, dry, or rocky soils**—just don’t overwater.
- **Pruning rarely necessary**, but may be shaped if used as a hedge or screen.
- **Best planted in full sun** for optimal growth and berry production.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A habitat hero, this juniper supports dozens of bird species who feast on its berry-like cones and find cover for nesting and roosting amid its branches.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This evergreen brings texture, privacy, and wildlife charm to any space. It’s **drought-tolerant, deer-resistant,** and packed with personality—from its fragrant foliage to its blue-berry-like cones that birds can’t resist.

WHERE TO PLANT

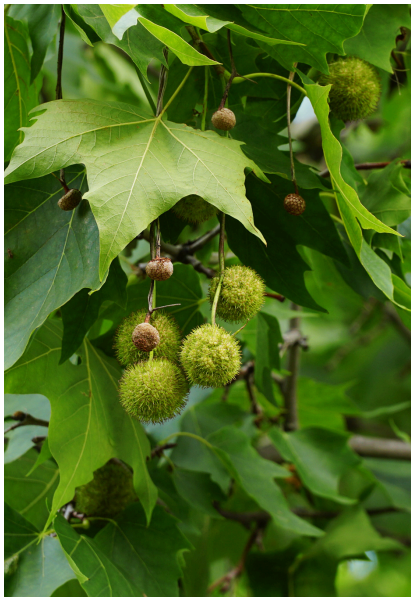
Perfect for windbreaks, screens, hedgerows, or erosion-prone slopes, especially in sunny, dry areas with thin or sandy soil. Not ideal for tight urban spaces.

This is a tree that toughs it out—whether in coastal conditions or compacted soil. **Just give it sun, and it will shine.**

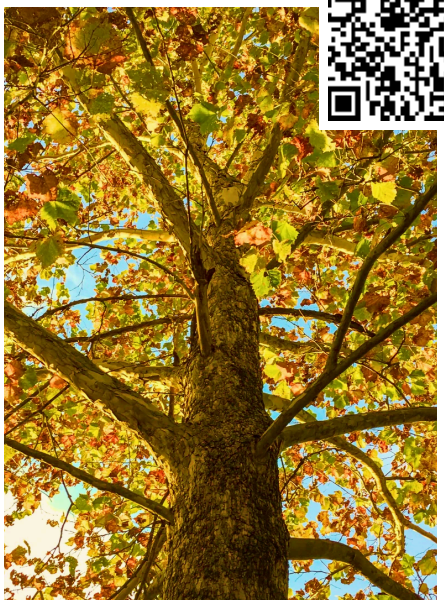
FUN FACT

Despite the name, the Eastern red cedar isn’t a “true cedar” at all—it’s a juniper!

Its reddish, aromatic wood has long been used to line closets and chests to deter moths. The piney scent is a natural insect repellent!







AMERICAN SYCAMORE *Platanus occidentalis*

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 75–100’ tall × 60–80’ wide
  Canopy Style: Massive, irregular, wide
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** High; thrives in wet soils
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Fast shade, large landscapes, riparian buffers, flood mitigation

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune in winter** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top!*

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Its patchy, camouflage-like bark and huge leaves make this tree impossible to miss.

A fast grower with dramatic presence, sycamores bring beauty and function to riversides and open spaces.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Provides vital habitat in riparian zones. Supports cavity-nesting birds, including wood ducks and owls. Stabilizes soil and improves water quality by filtering runoff.

WHERE TO PLANT

Thrives along creeks and low-lying wet areas. **Not a good fit for tight spaces**—sycamores need room to grow! *Avoid planting near sidewalks or foundations due to vigorous roots.*

FUN FACT:

*One of the largest native deciduous trees in North America—**historic specimens have trunks more than 10 feet wide!***







DURA HEAT® RIVER BIRCH

Betula nigra

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–40’ tall × 25–35’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Oval, spreading
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; tolerates wet soils
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Rain gardens, stream banks, wet yards

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top!*

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

With cinnamon-peeling bark and golden fall color, this beauty looks good year-round!

Unlike other birches, this cultivar resists heat stress and holds its leaves longer in southern summers.

WHERE TO PLANT

The Dura Heat® river birch is a native standout, tailor-made for soggy spots and sultry summers.

It thrives in low-lying, damp soils, soaking up stormwater and anchoring rain gardens, streambanks, and wet backyards.

River birch roots are vigorous! Avoid planting too close to sidewalks, driveways, or foundations, where root heaving could be a concern.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Seeds feed finches and other small birds. The foliage supports butterfly and moth caterpillars. Its roots stabilize streambanks, filtering runoff and reducing erosion.

FUN FACT

River birch bark was once used by Native Americans for canoes and shelters.







BLACKGUM / TUPELO

Nyssa sylvatica

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–50’ tall × 20–30’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Pyramidal when young, rounded with age
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; tolerates wet or dry sites once established
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—bees, birds, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, fall color, wildlife habitat

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Relatively low-maintenance,** blackgum trees require little pruning—just remove any dead, damaged, or crowded branches in late winter if needed.

WHERE TO PLANT

Prefers moist, acidic soil but tolerates a range of conditions. Its deep taproot makes it wind-firm but hard to transplant—plant small and let it grow. Choose a site with full sun to partial shade and give it space to develop its naturally upright, pyramidal shape.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

A Carolina classic, blackgum trees ignite in autumn with brilliant scarlet foliage—**one of the earliest and brightest fall shows in the Southeast!**

FUN FACT

The name “tupelo” comes from the Muscogee (Creek) language, meaning “tree of the swamp.”

Its nectar produces a prized honey—Tupelo honey.

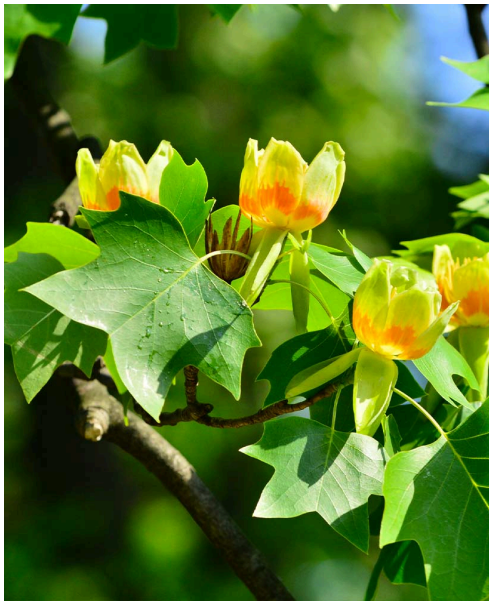
ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Early fall berries are a high-energy feast for birds and mammals —including wood ducks, robins, wild turkeys, and black bears.

Spring flowers attract native pollinators, while dense foliage offers nesting cover for songbirds.

In wetland or low-lying areas, deep roots help stabilize soil and reduce erosion.







TULIP POPLAR

Liriodendron tulipifera

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 70–100’ tall × 30–50’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Tall, upright, pyramidal
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained soil
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Fast shade, large yards, pollinators

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water deeply for the first 2 years—especially during dry periods.** Tulip poplars have fast growth rates and need consistent moisture to establish strong roots.
- **Stake, if needed.** These trees can grow tall quickly and may need support in windy or exposed areas.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!
- **Prune as needed in winter** to maintain structure. Remove any dead, damaged, or crossing limbs.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Few native trees grow as quickly or as gracefully.

Tulip poplars produce striking green-and-orange flowers in late spring, resembling tulips, and their golden fall foliage is a showstopper.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A pollinator powerhouse! Tulip poplar’s nectar-rich blooms support bees and other insects, while its leaves host the Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly. Its towering canopy provides nesting space for birds and shade for generations.

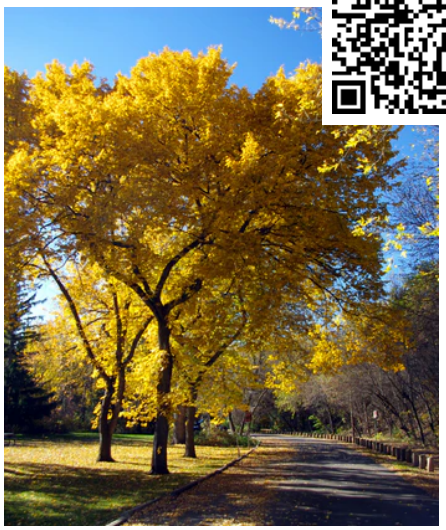
WHERE TO PLANT

This tree needs sunlight and space. Plant in large yards or along forest edges with good drainage. *Avoid dry, compacted soils or confined spaces.*

FUN FACT: *Despite its name, it’s not a poplar—**it’s actually in the magnolia family!***







‘PRINCETON’ AMERICAN ELM

Ulmus americana ‘Princeton’

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 60–80’ tall × 30–50’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Vase-shaped, arching
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes—disease-resistant cultivar of native elm
- **Ideal Use:** Fast shade, urban areas

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. Avoid warm-season pruning. *Never top!*

FUN FACT

Once America’s most popular street tree, the elm lined entire avenues with its graceful canopy.

WHERE TO PLANT

Ideal for large yards, this elm needs ample space to reach its full potential—maturing at 60–80' tall with an equally impressive canopy spread.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Developed in 1922, the ‘Princeton’ cultivar is prized for its resistance to Dutch elm disease, helping to restore this iconic tree to our landscapes. Fast-growing and adaptable, it tolerates a wide range of urban conditions, from compacted soils to air pollution, while still displaying its iconic form.

Its tall, arching limbs makes every street look like a cathedral and every yard feel like a park.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Hosts the caterpillars, supporting butterfly and insect populations at the base of the food web. Its seeds and foliage feed countless birds and small mammals.







BLACK CHERRY

Prunus serotina

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 50–80’ tall × 30–60’ wide
  Canopy Style: Upright when young, then develops a broad, rounded crown
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; adaptable once established
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Exceptional—birds, pollinators, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Wildlife gardens, reforestation projects, large yards,

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!
- **Avoid soil compaction** near roots.

FUN FACT

Black cherry supports more caterpillar species than almost any other tree in North Carolina—over 450 species use it as a host plant!

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

In spring, black cherry erupts in cascading clusters of fragrant white flowers that attract a wide range of pollinators. By summer, those blooms give way to dark cherries. Its leaves turn yellow-orange in fall, adding seasonal interest.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

One of the most valuable native trees for wildlife on the east coast! Its flowers provide nectar and pollen for native bees, while its fruit feeds 40+ species of birds. Even more importantly, it serves as a larval host plant for hundreds of species of moths and butterflies, helping support the insects that songbirds rely on to raise their young.

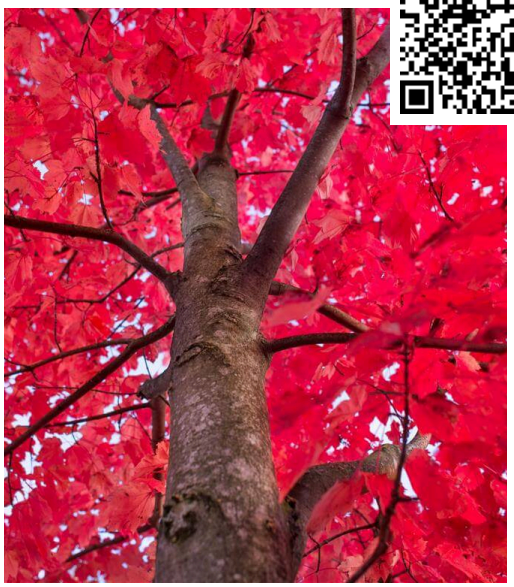
WHERE TO PLANT

Thrives in full sun and adapts to a wide range of soil conditions, including sand and clay.

Best suited for larger spaces where it can reach full size and provide maximum shade and habitat.







RED MAPLE

Acer rubrum

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–70’ tall × 30–50’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broadly oval
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; adaptable
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, ornamental, lawns

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune in winter** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. Avoid warm-season pruning. *Never top!*

FUN FACT

The red maple gets its name not just from its fall foliage, but because its buds, flowers, and stems are red too. It can flash a bit of crimson in every season!

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

A native showstopper, the red maple delivers beauty in every season—vibrant red buds in spring, lush green foliage through summer, and a scarlet display in the fall! **Fast-growing and low-maintenance**, their upright, symmetrical form make red maples both practical and picturesque.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Red maples are **pollinator powerhouses**, great for urban ecosystems. Their very early blooms provide nectar before most trees flower.

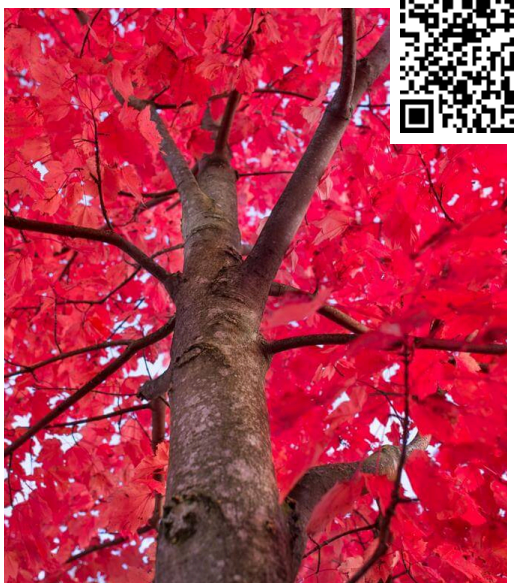
WHERE TO PLANT

This tree needs room to shine and space for the roots and canopy to spread! *Avoid cramped areas near sidewalks, driveways, or overhead wires.*

Plant in open, sunny spots with good air circulation.







‘AUTUMN BLAZE’ RED MAPLE

Acer rubrum × freemanii

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–55’ tall × 30–40’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad oval to rounded
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; adaptable
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Limited.
- **Native to NC:** Hybrid (red x silver maple)
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, ornamental, lawns

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune in winter** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. Avoid warm-season pruning. *Never top!*

FUN FACT

‘Autumn Blaze’ is one of the most widely planted maple cultivars in the U.S.—loved for its dependable fall color and rapid growth.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

A landscape favorite, ‘Autumn Blaze’ combines the fast growth of silver maple with the brilliant color of red maple. Expect a fiery red fall display and a more uniform, upright form—making it a go-to for quick shade and seasonal color.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

While it offers some habitat value, Autumn Blaze is less beneficial to wildlife than native red maples. Consider pairing with native species to support pollinators and birds while still enjoying its striking visual impact.

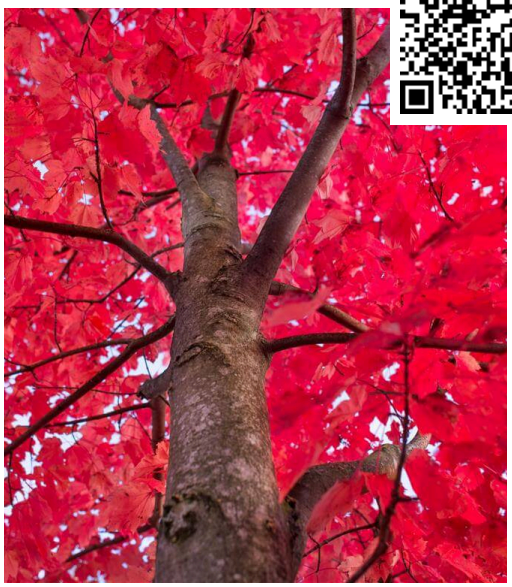
WHERE TO PLANT

Give this tree room to shine! Plant in open, sunny spots with good air circulation.

Tolerates a wider range of soils, including drier sites. Avoid overly compacted spaces, but it performs well in typical residential landscapes and along streets.







‘OCTOBER GLORY’ RED MAPLE

Acer rubrum

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 40–50’ tall × 25–35’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broadly oval
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; adaptable
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds
- **Native to NC:** Yes—cultivar of native red maple
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, ornamental, lawns

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. Avoid warm-season pruning. *Never top!*

FUN FACT

True to its name, October Glory’s fall color is considered one of the best among maples in the South!

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Famous for its spectacular crimson foliage that lingers into late fall—when most trees are bare, October Glory is just hitting its stride.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Red maples are pollinator powerhouses, great for urban ecosystems. Their very early blooms provide nectar before most trees flower. Unlike the ‘Brandywine’ variety of maple, ‘October Glory’ typically sets showy red samaras, adding spring food for birds and small mammals.

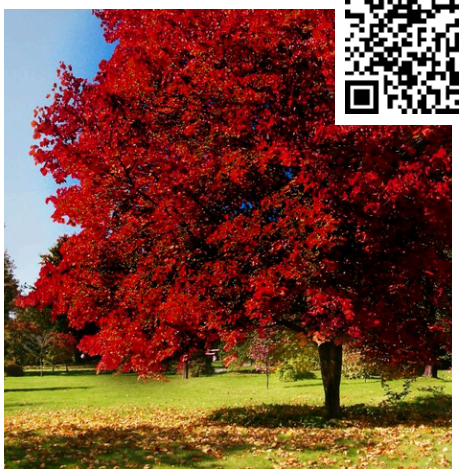
WHERE TO PLANT

This tree needs room to shine and space for the roots and canopy to spread! *Avoid cramped areas near sidewalks, driveways, or overhead wires.*

Plant in open, sunny spots with good air circulation.







‘BRANDYWINE’ RED MAPLE

Acer rubrum

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 25–35’ tall × 15–25’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Upright, oval
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; adaptable
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes—cultivar of native maple
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, compact sites, fall color

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. Avoid warm-season pruning. *Never top!*

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This red maple cultivar was bred for knockout fall color—deep purple-red that lasts longer than most.

Plus, it’s seedless, so you won’t be raking up samaras (“helicopters”)!

WHERE TO PLANT

Plant your Brandywine Red Maple in full sun with well-drained soil—front or back yards, wide roadside strips, or open lawn areas are ideal.

Avoid power lines and hardscapes; give it space to grow up to 50' tall with a broad, oval canopy.

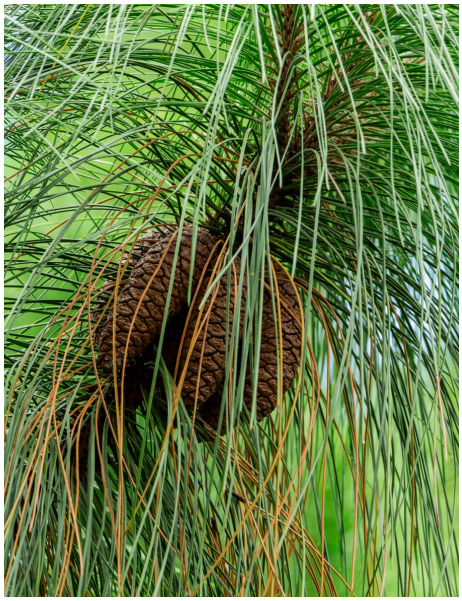
ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Red maples are pollinator powerhouses, great for urban ecosystems. Their early blooms provide nectar before most trees flower. The ‘Brandywine’ variety is largely seedless, so it provides less fruit for wildlife than seed-bearing maples, but it still supports biodiversity and provides year-round habitat.

FUN FACT

In 1994, the Brandywine was developed by the U.S. National Arboretum for brilliant, reliable fall color and strong landscape performance.







LONGLEAF PINE

Pinus palustris

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen
- **Size at Maturity:** 60–100’ tall × 30–40’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Open, airy, tall crown
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Low once established
- **Growth Rate:** Slow at first (“grass stage”), then moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, especially red-cockaded woodpeckers
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Legacy, drought-tolerant landscapes, habitat restoration

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Requires patience**—young trees spend years in the “grass stage” to build root strength.
- **Avoid pruning lower limbs early on**—they’re critical for photosynthesis and trunk strength as the tree matures.
- **Keep grass and weeds away from the base** with mulch or regular maintenance to reduce stress and encourage growth.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This is the tree that built the South—literally.

Once dominating millions of acres, the longleaf pine is a fire-adapted icon of the coastal plain, offering unmatched resilience and ecological value.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Supports rare and endangered species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker and gopher tortoise.

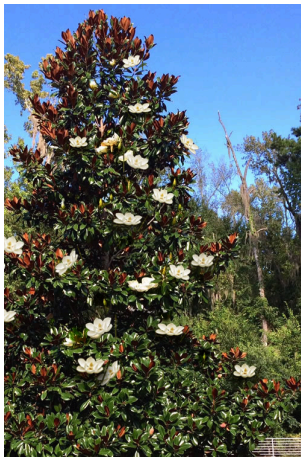
Its deep roots stabilize soil and improve drought resilience.

WHERE TO PLANT

Needs sandy, well-drained soil and full sun. Longleaf pine doesn’t like wet feet or shade. Best suited for restoration sites or large open landscapes.

FUN FACT:

Longleaf pine needles can reach up to 18 inches long—and were historically used in baskets and bedding!







‘BRACKEN'S BROWN BEAUTY’ MAGNOLIA

Magnolia grandiflora

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–50’ tall × 15–25’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Pyramidal, dense
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Evergreen screening, accent tree, year-round interest

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

A cultivar of the Southern magnolia, Bracken’s Brown Beauty keeps its form tidy in a neat, pyramidal shape.

You’ll positively swoon over the leaves with their glossy green tops and velvety brown undersides, and oh, those creamy, fragrant summer blooms!

FUN FACT

Magnolias are ancient—fossils date back 95 million years, before bees existed. They were (and still are!) pollinated by beetles!

WHERE TO PLANT

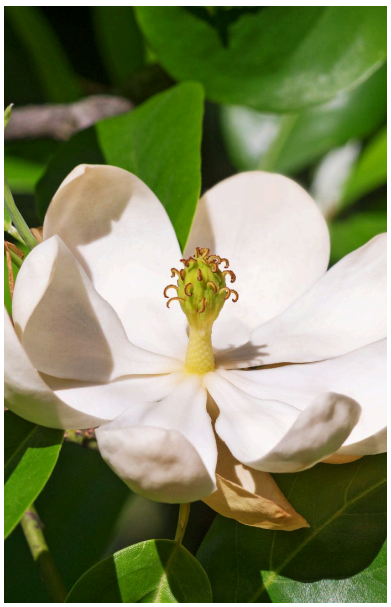
Perfect for smaller yards or urban lots where a full-size magnolia would be too large. Great for use as an evergreen screen! Protect from prolonged soggy soil; once established, it tolerates heat and brief dry spells.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

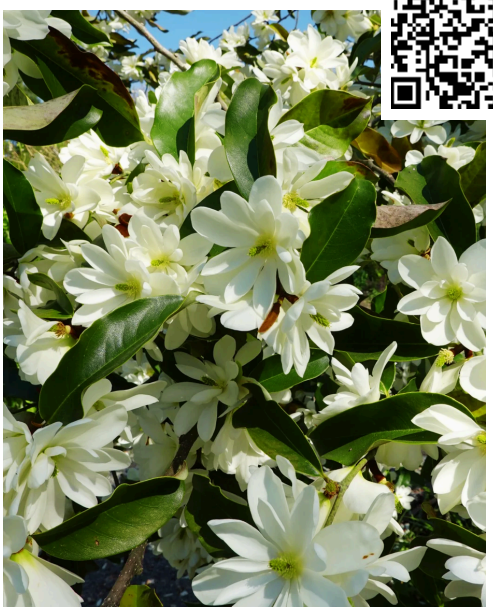
Showy summer blooms supply nectar and pollen for native pollinators. Produces red seeds relished by songbirds and small mammals. The dense, evergreen canopy offers year-round cover and nesting sites.

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!
- **Avoid soil compaction** or construction near roots.
- **Prune only lightly in late winter if needed**—magnolias dislike heavy cuts.







SWEETBAY MAGNOLIA

Magnolia virginiana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Semi-evergreen
- **Size at Maturity:** 10–35’ tall × 10–20’ wide
  Canopy Style: Upright, airy, multi-stem or single trunk
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; prefers moist, acidic soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—bees, birds
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Rain gardens, small yards, naturalistic landscapes, habitat

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!
- **Avoid soil compaction** near roots.
- **Prune only lightly in late winter if needed**—magnolias dislike heavy cuts.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This graceful native magnolia produces creamy-white, lemon-scented blooms from spring through summer.

Its leaves are glossy green with silvery undersides, catching light with every breeze.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Flowers feed native pollinators, while red seeds attract birds. Its roots hold wet soils in place, making it a **top performer in storm-prone areas.**

WHERE TO PLANT

Thrives in rain gardens, woodland edges, and other moist spots. Tolerates clay soil and some flooding. Can be grown as a small tree or large shrub. *Avoid dry or exposed sites with inconsistent moisture.*

FUN FACT:

Sweetbay magnolia was the **first magnolia described to science in North America**—way back in 1688!







EASTERN REDBUD

Cercis canadensis

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–30’ tall × 15–25’ wide
  Canopy Style: Spreading, rounded
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Ornamental, small yards, early blooms, understory, pollinator garden

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to establish strong roots, especially during dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Keep mulch away from the trunk, and leave the root flare visible!
- **Avoid soil compaction** or prolonged soggy conditions.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and to maintain form. Avoid heavy pruning or topping, which can stress the tree and ruin its natural shape.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Redbuds are among the first to bloom each spring, with vivid magenta-pink flowers bursting straight from the branches. Heart-shaped leaves follow, and pollinators rejoice!

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A top native for early-season bees. Its foliage also supports some butterfly larvae. Seeds are eaten by songbirds and small mammals.

WHERE TO PLANT

Perfect for front yards, understory spots, or near patios. **Prefers well-drained soil and some protection from harsh afternoon sun** in hotter microclimates.

Avoid low spots with poor drainage or standing water.

FUN FACT

The flowers are edible! Try them out in a salad.







MEXICAN REDBUD

Cercis canadensis var. mexicana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–30’ tall × 15–25’ wide
  Canopy Style: Spreading, rounded
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes—native cultivar
- **Ideal Use:** Ornamental, small yards, early blooms, understory, pollinator garden

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to establish strong roots, especially during dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Keep mulch away from the trunk, and leave the root flare visible!
- **Avoid soil compaction** or prolonged soggy conditions.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and to maintain form. Avoid heavy pruning or topping, which can stress the tree and ruin its natural shape.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Mexican redbuds offer the same stunning early-spring blooms as our native redbuds, with pink flowers bursting from the branches. Heart-shaped leaves follow, and pollinators rejoice—with the added bonus of improved tolerance to heat, drought, and alkaline soils.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A top choice for early-season bees. Its foliage also supports some butterfly larvae. Seeds are eaten by songbirds and small mammals.

WHERE TO PLANT

Perfect for front yards, understory spots, or near patios. **Prefers well-drained soil and some protection from harsh afternoon sun** in hotter microclimates.

Avoid low spots with poor drainage or standing water.

FUN FACT

The flowers are edible! Try them out in a salad.







AMERICAN HOLLY

Ilex opaca

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–50’ tall × 15–25’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Pyramidal, dense
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers well-drained soil
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Screening, privacy hedge, specimen tree, wildlife garden

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to establish strong roots, especially during dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Keep mulch away from the trunk, and leave the root flare visible!
- **Prefers slightly acidic soils.** *Avoid over-liming.*
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and to maintain form. Avoid heavy pruning or topping.

FUN FACT

American holly has been used in holiday décor for centuries—and its wood was once prized for fine furniture, tool handles, and even early piano keys.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

With its glossy green leaves and bright red berries, the American holly is a classic Southern evergreen!

It’s elegant, resilient, and unmistakably festive.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A powerhouse for winter wildlife! American holly berries persist into winter, feeding birds when food is scarce. In spring, its flowers support pollinators, and its dense branches off year-round shelter and nesting habitat.

WHERE TO PLANT

Ideal for privacy screens, woodland edges, or as a striking specimen tree.

Appreciates protection from afternoon sun when young. Once established, it tolerates heat, humidity, and drought.

Note: To produce berries, you’ll need at least one male plant nearby to cross-pollinate.







SOURWOOD

Oxydendrum arboreum

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 25–50’ tall × 15–25’ wide (often smaller in urban sites)
- **Canopy Style:** Narrow, pyramidal to oval; graceful, layered branches
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers acidic, well-drained soils
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—nectar for pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Understory, pollinator gardens, acidic sites, four-season interest, fall color

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to establish strong roots, especially during dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Keep mulch away from the trunk, and leave the root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- **Avoid soil compaction** or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and to maintain form. *Avoid heavy pruning. Never top!*

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Shimmering white lily-of-the-valley blooms dangle delicately in mid-summer.

Seed panicles follow, persisting into winter—while **few native species can rival its fiery scarlet fall color.**

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A premier nectar tree for bees, producing the prized **“sourwood honey.”**

Its summer bloom bridges a seasonal nectar gap, supporting pollinators when few native trees are flowering.

WHERE TO PLANT

Choose a sunny to lightly shaded spot with acidic, well-drained soil (avoid alkaline or compacted sites).

Excellent near patios or entries where flowers and fall color can be admired.





FRINGE TREE

Chionanthus virginicus

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 12–20’ tall × 12–20’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, spreading
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained soils
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Accent tree, small yards, understory, spring blooms

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to establish strong roots, especially during dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Keep mulch away from the trunk, and leave the root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Minimal pruning needed.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

With **billowy white blossoms** that look like delicate fringe or “old man’s beard,” this native tree is a springtime spectacle. Its fragrant, showy spring blooms support pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

FUN FACT

The fringe tree is dioecious—male and female flowers grow on separate trees. In fall, female trees produce clusters of dark blue, olive-like fruit loved by birds and wildlife!

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Beyond its blooms and fruits, this tree also offers cover and nesting habitat within its dense branching structure, making it an excellent choice for enhancing biodiversity in both urban and natural landscapes.

WHERE TO PLANT

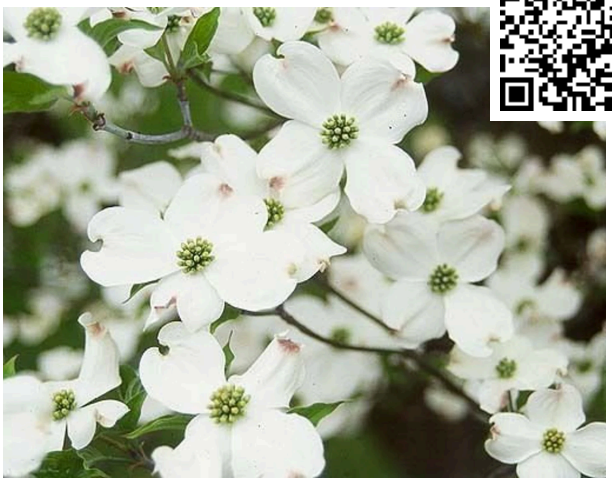
Fringe trees thrive in filtered light, especially near moist, well-drained soils.

Avoid exposed, dry locations— these trees do best with some natural shelter. They can tolerate full sun, but will require consistent watering during establishment, especially in hot, dry sites.

Fringe trees also tolerate clay soils more successfully than many other ornamentals!







FLOWERING DOGWOOD

Cornus florida

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–30’ tall × 15–30’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Horizontal branching with a layered, rounded crown
- **Sun Requirements:** Part shade to full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained, slightly acidic soil
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds, and small mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Understory planting, pollinator gardens, small yards

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years—especially during dry spells—to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- **Avoid soil compaction** or construction near roots.
- If shaping is desired, **prune lightly after flowering**.

FUN FACT

The “petals” of a flowering dogwood aren’t actually petals—they’re bracts! The true flowers are the tiny green clusters in the center.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

A true Southern classic: creamy white (sometimes blush-tinted) spring bracts, bright red berries in late summer, rich burgundy foliage in fall, and beautifully textured bark in winter.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A powerhouse native for wildlife. Early spring blooms support native bees and other pollinators. Its fall berries (drupes) feed migrating and resident birds—including cardinals, woodpeckers, thrushes, and mockingbirds. As a host plant for several moth and butterfly species, it strengthens the local food web. Thrives as a woodland understory tree, supporting layered forest habitat.

WHERE TO PLANT

Best as an understory tree below larger canopy trees or along woodland edges. Protect from intense afternoon sun and hot, dry sites. Avoid poorly drained soils or exposed, high-heat locations. Ideal near patios, garden beds, or as a focal point in naturalized landscapes.







‘AUTUMN BRILLIANCE’ SERVICEBERRY

Amelanchier × grandiflora

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–25’ tall × 15–20’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Upright, rounded, multi-stem or single trunk
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; tolerates most soils with good drainage
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds, and small mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes—serviceberry hybrid
- **Ideal Use:** Edible berries, four-season interest, small yards, pollinator gardens

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1-2 years—especially during dry spells—to encourage root growth.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- **Avoid soil compaction** or construction near roots.
- If shaping is desired, **prune lightly after flowering**.

FUN FACT

Those summer berries aren’t just for the birds—they’re edible for people too! Early settlers baked them into jams and pies.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

A true four-season showstopper: clouds of white flowers in spring, tasty red-purple berries in summer, fiery orange-red foliage in fall, and silvery bark in winter.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Beloved by pollinators in spring, then feeds cedar waxwings, robins, and mockingbirds in summer. Provides shade and stormwater interception despite its smaller size.

WHERE TO PLANT

Great for smaller spaces, under power lines, or as a focal point near garden beds. Avoid consistently soggy or poorly drained sites, which can lead to root stress.

Note: This tree produces berries that attract birds and can create a bit of a mess—so it’s best to avoid planting over hard surfaces like driveways, patios, or sidewalks.







CLARYNETTE® AMERICAN HORNBEAM

Carpinus caroliniana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 20–30’ tall × 20–30’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, dense
- **Sun Requirements:** Partial sun to full shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; thrives in moist soils
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators, mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade tree for small yards, narrow spaces, screening, naturalistic plantings, urban sites

TREE CARE TIPS

- Keep soil consistently moist, especially when young (1–2 years); Water deeply once a week during dry spells to help young roots establish.
- Minimal pruning required.
- Mulch generously to mimic forest-floor conditions. Keep mulch a few inches away from the trunk to prevent rot and allow for air circulation.

WHERE TO PLANT

Thrives in low, moist sites like streambanks but also adapts well to urban settings with adequate shade. Requires full shade to partial sun—it is not ideal for full sun in southeastern NC’s hot climate and sandy soils. If planted in a more open location, ensure it receives afternoon shade and regular moisture to prevent stress.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This tree is graceful yet tough! Fall color ranges from yellow to orange to red.

This cultivar is prized for its uniform form.

FUN FACT

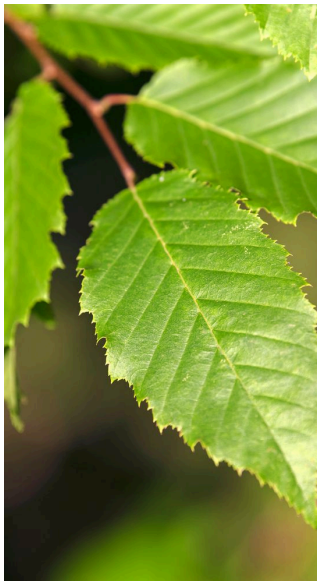
Known as “ironwood” or “musclewood” for its strong, sinewy trunk.

Early Americans used its extremely hard wood for tool handles and bowls.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Seeds feed songbirds and small mammals, while dense foliage provides nesting habitat.

Supports the caterpillars of several native butterfly and moth species, playing a key role in the food web for birds and beneficial insects.







AMERICAN HORNBEAM *Carpinus caroliniana*

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 20–35’ tall × 20–30’ wide
  Canopy Style: Low, rounded, finely textured
- **Sun Requirements:** Partial shade to shade (tolerates morning sun)
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained soils, tolerates brief flooding
- **Growth Rate:** Slow to moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—catkins/seeds for birds; excellent caterpillar host
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Understory shade, streambanks, small yards, naturalistic plantings

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first 1–2 years to establish strong roots, especially during dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. Keep mulch away from the trunk, and leave the root flare visible to avoid rot!
- **Avoid soil compaction** or construction near roots.
- **Prune lightly during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and to maintain form. *Avoid heavy pruning. Never top.*
- **Avoid high-alkaline or chronically dry soils.**

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Also called **“musclewood”** for its smooth, sinewy trunk, this elegant understory tree brings refined texture and glowing orange-red fall color to shady spaces where few trees shine.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A powerhouse for woodland food webs: supports many native moth and butterfly larvae, offers early catkins for birds, and provides cover for songbirds.

Its dense canopy cools soil and stabilizes streambanks.

WHERE TO PLANT

Thrives in dappled light with consistently moist, well-drained soil—think woodland edges, north/east sides of homes, or along creeks (out of standing water).

Protect from reflected heat and heavily compacted sites.







PAWPAW

Asimina triloba

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–25’ tall × 10–20’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Upright, oval; forms small colonies by suckering
- **Sun Requirements:** Partial shade (full sun yields more fruit with adequate moisture)
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers organically rich, moist, well-drained soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—mammals, bugs
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Edible landscaping, woodland edges, small groves, understory

FUN FACT: Pawpaw is the largest edible fruit native to North America.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

Big, tropical-looking leaves, burgundy spring flowers, and **custard-textured fruit with notes of banana and mango**.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A specialist host for zebra swallowtail butterflies! Flowers are pollinated by flies and beetles. Fragrant fruit feeds raccoons, opossums, foxes—and people! **Foliage is typically deer-resistant.**

WHERE TO PLANT

Give it morning sun and afternoon shade—and fertile, consistently moist soil. Plant two (or more) genetically distinct trees within 15–25 feet for reliable fruit set.

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1–2x/week) and deeply** during the first two years to encourage strong root growth. Maintain consistent soil moisture, especially during hot or dry periods.
- **Maintain a 2–3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible!*
- **Avoid soil compaction** or disturbance near roots.
- **Prune lightly during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches. *Avoid aggressive pruning, and never top.*
- **Allow (or remove) suckers** depending on whether you want a grove or single-stem tree.







PERSIMMON

Diospyros virginiana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–60’ tall × 20–35’ wide
  Canopy Style: Oval or irregular
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Medium; drought-tolerant once established; prefers acidic to neutral soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—mammals, birds
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Edible fruit, wildlife gardening

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first year to encourage root growth. Mature trees tolerate drought but benefit from occasional watering in dry spells.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Leave the trunk’s root flare visible to avoid rot!*
- Avoid soil compaction or construction near roots.
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and maintain structure. *Avoid warm-season pruning. Never top!*
- **Plant in full sun for best fruit production.**

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This low-maintenance native fruit tree offers delicious golden-orange persimmons (when fully ripe!) and fiery fall foliage.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Persimmons feed foxes, opossums, raccoons, deer, and more. Its leaves and flowers also support insects and pollinators.

FUN FACT

Early American settlers used persimmon seeds as a coffee substitute—and folklore says you can predict winter weather from the seed’s pattern!

WHERE TO PLANT

Prefers sunny sites with well-drained soil. Great for naturalized areas, edible landscapes, or woodland edges.

Give it space—it may sucker to form small groves. *Avoid overly wet or compacted areas.*





BEAUTYBERRY

Callicarpa americana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous shrub
- **Size at Maturity:** 3–6’ tall × 3–6’ wide
- **Canopy Style:** Arching, open
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; drought-tolerant once established; adaptable to a range of soils
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate to fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Wildlife gardens, understory plantings, naturalized areas, pollinator habitat

TREE CARE TIPS

- **Water routinely (1-2x/week) and deeply** during the first year to encourage root growth. Once established, it tolerates dry periods well.
- **Maintain a 2-3" layer of mulch** to stabilize soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce weeds. *Keep mulch away from stems to discourage rot!*
- **Prune in late winter**—beautyberry blooms on new growth, so pruning encourages a fuller plant and better berry production.
- **Avoid heavy fertilization**—it thrives in average soils.

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

This low-maintenance native shrub is known for its vivid clusters of bright berries that wrap around its stems in fall—a showstopper! Soft green foliage and a graceful, arching form make it a standout in both wild and designed spaces.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A wildlife powerhouse! Its berries feed birds and small mammals well into fall and winter, while its flowers support bees and other pollinators.

FUN FACT

Crushed beautyberry leaves have been traditionally used as a natural insect repellent—a handy trick from generations past!

WHERE TO PLANT

Great for woodland edges, naturalized landscapes, or mixed native plantings. Give it space—its arching branches create a loose, spreading form. Cut back in late winter to encourage fuller growth and more berries.