



RED MULBERRY

Morus rubra

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 30–50' tall × 30–50' wide
- **Canopy Style:** Broad, rounded, spreading
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to part shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained soils but adapts to various conditions
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate to fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds, butterflies, mammals, and pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Shade, fruiting, wildlife habitat

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

Native red mulberry is one of North Carolina's most valuable wildlife trees. Its sweet, blackberry-like fruit is enjoyed by people and wildlife alike, while its canopy provides cooling shade.

FUN FACT

A single red mulberry tree can produce thousands of delicious berries each year.

The fruit ripens in late spring to early summer and can be eaten fresh or used in jams, pies, cobblers, and preserves.

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!
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches and develop a strong canopy.

WHERE TO PLANT

Red mulberry thrives in full sun to partial shade. Give it room to grow—its broad canopy makes it an excellent shade tree. Plant at least 20–30 feet from buildings, sidewalks, and driveways to accommodate its mature size and seasonal fruit drop.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

A biodiversity powerhouse, the mulberry's flowers support pollinators, while its fruit feeds birds, squirrels, foxes, opossums, and other wildlife. Its leaves also serve as host plants for several native butterflies and moths, making it an important contributor to healthy urban ecosystems. Plant one tree, and you'll feed an entire neighborhood of wildlife!



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.*



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

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.

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!*



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

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

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.



AMERICAN PLUM

Prunus americana

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–25' tall × 15–20' wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, multi-stemmed, often forms colonies
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; adaptable to a variety of soils once established
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds, butterflies, and mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Small yards, fruiting, habitat

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 root flare visible to avoid rot.*
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead or damaged branches and maintain shape.
- **Chickasaw plum naturally produces root suckers**, allowing it to form wildlife-friendly thickets. *Remove suckers if you prefer a single-tree appearance.*

FUN FACT

The American plum was cultivated by Indigenous peoples long before European settlement.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

Among the first trees to bloom each spring, the American plum covers itself in fragrant white blossoms before its leaves emerge. By early summer, it rewards both people and wildlife with small, sweet-tart plums perfect for fresh eating or homemade jams and jellies.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

The American plum's early spring flowers provide nectar and pollen for native bees and other beneficial insects when few woody plants are in bloom. By summer, the fruit feeds songbirds and many other animals, while its dense branching provides nesting sites and protective cover. As a host plant for several native butterflies and moths, the American plum tree is an important part of a healthy backyard ecosystem.

WHERE TO PLANT

Plant American plum in full sun for optimal blooms and fruit. Planting two or more plum trees nearby improves pollination and helps produce a heavier crop.



CHICKASAW PLUM

Prunus angustifolia

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–25' tall × 15–25' wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, multi-stemmed, often forms thickets
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun
- **Water Needs:** Low to medium; drought-tolerant once established
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate to fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—pollinators, birds, butterflies, and mammals
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Small yards, fruiting, habitat

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 root flare visible to avoid rot.*
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead or damaged branches and maintain shape.
- **Chickasaw plum naturally produces root suckers**, allowing it to form wildlife-friendly thickets. *Remove suckers if you prefer a single-tree appearance.*

FUN FACT

Chickasaw plum was cultivated by Indigenous peoples long before European settlement.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

Among the first trees to bloom each spring, Chickasaw plum covers itself in fragrant white blossoms before its leaves emerge. By early summer, it rewards both people and wildlife with small, sweet-tart plums perfect for fresh eating or homemade jams and jellies.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

The Chickasaw plum's early spring flowers provide nectar and pollen for native bees and other beneficial insects when few woody plants are in bloom. By summer, the fruit feeds songbirds, foxes, raccoons, opossums, and many other animals, while its dense branching provides nesting sites and protective cover.

WHERE TO PLANT

Plant Chickasaw plum in full sun for the best flowering and fruit production. It thrives in well-drained soils and is highly tolerant of heat and drought once established. Plant two or more Chickasaw plums nearby to encourage better pollination and increase fruit production.



RED BUCKEYE

Aesculus pavia

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous
- **Size at Maturity:** 15–20' tall × 15–20' wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, compact
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium; prefers moist, well-drained soils but tolerates short dry periods once established
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Small yards, pollinator gardens

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.*
- **Prune during winter dormancy** to remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches. Red buckeye naturally grows as a small tree and requires very little pruning once established.

WHERE TO PLANT

The buckeye's modest size makes it a good choice for small lots, beneath utility lines, near patios, or as a colorful focal point in pollinator gardens.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

One of the first native trees to bloom each spring, red buckeye lights up the landscape with vibrant red flower clusters that attract hummingbirds and pollinators when few other trees are in bloom.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Red buckeye is one of the Southeast's premier pollinator trees. Its early spring flowers provide nectar for hummingbirds, native bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects when floral resources are scarce.

As the tree matures, its dense canopy offers cover for birds and small wildlife, making it an excellent addition to habitat-friendly landscapes.

FUN FACT

Ruby-throated hummingbirds time their spring migration to coincide with blooming native plants like red buckeye.

Its nectar-rich flowers provide an important food source for hummingbirds returning to North Carolina each spring.



WINTERBERRY HOLLY

Ilex verticillata

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Deciduous shrub
- **Size at Maturity:** 6–12' tall × 6–10' wide
- **Canopy Style:** Rounded, multi-stemmed, naturally dense
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Water Needs:** Medium to high; thrives in moist soils but adapts to average garden conditions
- **Growth Rate:** Moderate
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds and pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Winter interest, small yards, habitat

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Winterberry is one of the most valuable native shrubs for wildlife. Its spring flowers provide nectar and pollen for native bees and other pollinators, while the bright red berries become an important late-fall and winter food source for birds after many other foods have disappeared. Its dense branching also provides nesting sites and shelter for songbirds throughout the year.

WHERE TO PLANT

Winterberry grows best in full sun to partial shade and naturally thrives in moist soils. It also performs well in average garden soils with regular watering during establishment. Plant winterberry where its colorful berries can be enjoyed throughout the winter—near patios, entryways, or windows!

FUN FACT

Want lots of berries? Plant a pair. Female winterberry plants rely on nearby male plants—and native pollinators—to produce the colorful fruits that feed birds throughout the winter.

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.*
- **Prune in late winter to remove dead or damaged stems or maintain shape.** Will tolerate rejuvenation pruning if it becomes overgrown.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

When most landscapes turn gray, winterberry steals the show. Brilliant red berries brighten the winter landscape long after the leaves have fallen, providing vibrant color and an important food source for birds.



SOUTHERN WAX MYRTLE

Myrica cerifera

At a Glance

- **Tree Type:** Evergreen
- **Size at Maturity:** 10–20' tall × 8–15' wide
- **Canopy Style:** Dense, rounded, multi-stemmed (can be trained into a small tree)
- **Sun Requirements:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Water Needs:** Low to medium; drought-, salt-, and wind-tolerant once established
- **Growth Rate:** Fast
- **Wildlife Attractant:** Yes—birds and pollinators
- **Native to NC:** Yes
- **Ideal Use:** Small yards, privacy screens, habitat

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

One of the southeast's most versatile natives, the wax myrtle's fragrant evergreen foliage, rapid growth, and adaptability make it an excellent choice for **privacy, screening, or adding year-round greenery.**

ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Southern wax myrtle provides year-round habitat and food for wildlife. Female plants produce bluish-gray berries that feed songbirds through the winter, while the dense evergreen branches offer shelter and nesting sites.

As a nitrogen-fixing plant, it also helps improve soil health and supports resilient landscapes.

WHERE TO PLANT

Plant southern wax myrtle 6–10' from buildings if using it as a hedge or screen, or farther away if allowing it to reach its full size.

It thrives in full sun but tolerates partial shade and adapts well to sandy, coastal, or urban soils.

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.*
- **Prune in late winter or early spring** to remove dead or crossing branches or to maintain a tree form. It also responds well to rejuvenation pruning if it becomes overgrown.

FUN FACT

The waxy berries were once used to make fragrant candles. Early settlers boiled the berries to extract their wax, giving this native plant its common name, "wax myrtle."