


MESSENGER-INQUIRER

	University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service
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A Diversity of Trees Available for the Landscape
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When adding or replacing a tree in the landscape, look around to see what is already growing. The larger the number of trees within the same family, the more likely they may be attacked by insect pests or disease. In addition, consider the tree's characteristics such as flowers, fruits, foliage color, and bark. Also take into account the growing conditions needed.

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* species and hybrids) is a small native tree reaching 20 to 25 feet tall with a width of 10 to 20 feet. White blossoms cover the tree in early spring. Berry-like fruits are orange-shaped, one-quarter inch in diameter, and change color from green to red to purplish-black when mature in June. Birds love them. The colorful fall foliage is red-orange to red-purple. The smooth, gray bark is attractive in winter. Serviceberry can be grown as a large shrub. It can grow in full sun or moderate shade and prefers well-drained soil.

Cornelian cherry dogwood (*Cornus mas*) is a broad tree that reaches 15 to 25 feet tall with a spread of 15 to 20 feet. In March the small .75-inch flowers cover the tree with a yellow

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

glow. Bees appreciate the early flowers. Bright red fruits are produced in summer. Beautiful grayish brown bark exfoliates on older branches. It prefers to grow in well-drained soil and partial shade to full sun.

American hornbeam or musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), has interesting, smooth, gray bark resembling flexed muscles. This slow-growing, medium-sized tree reaches 20 to 30 feet tall and wide. It can be found as a large shrub if not trained in the nursery to a single trunk tree. Fall color varies from yellow to orange. It tolerates wet sites but also grows in drier locations. Musclewood endures some shade.

Amur maackia (*Maackia amurensis*) is a medium tree reaching 20 to 30 feet tall and wide. Dull white flowers are produced on 4- to 6-inch upright racemes in June and July. The 2- to 3-inch-long fruits are brown. Fall color is muted. The bark becomes attractive with maturity as it peels. It requires well-drained soil in a sunny location. In addition, this tree is drought tolerant, especially once established.

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is a beautiful native, spring flowering tree. The half-inch long, reddish-purple flowers are produced on the branches before the leaves appear. Flowers are often found on the trunk too. Attractive, brown, flat seed pods often stay on the tree until the following spring. Redbud grows in sun or shade and is best used as an understory tree. Soil should be well drained. Verticillium wilt and borers are sometimes a problem with redbuds, especially on sites with multiple stress factors. Redbud is bee friendly.

The fringe tree, *Chionanthus virginicus*, is actually a native large shrub reaching 15 to 20 feet tall that can be pruned into a tree form. The medium green leaves are lustrous on top, pale

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

underneath, and 3 to 8 inches long. Flowers are eye-catching and very fragrant. In early May to June, the three-quarter- to 1-inch white flowers hang down gracefully in 6 to 8-inch long clusters. This species has male and female flowers on different plants. The male plants are showier in bloom than female plants, but they will not have fruit. Female plants have flowers and abundant dark blue fruits that are about two-thirds of an inch long. To have fruit, a female and a male plant are required. In the fall, the leaves are yellow. It grows in full sun or partial shade. It prefers well-drained but occasionally dry soil.

Carolina silverbell, (*Halesia carolina*), grows 30 to 40 feet tall. Translucent white, one-inch flowers hang from the branches in May. An interesting star-shaped, papery fruit is produced. As the tree gets older, the bark becomes more attractive with gray to brown to black color combinations. It prefers to grow in well-drained, good soil and partial shade in Kentucky.

Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*) is a slow to medium-growing tree reaching 20 to 30 feet in height with a similar spread at maturity. The shape of the tree has an oval to rounded outline. Leaf shape is three-lobed, resembling a three-pronged pitchfork, hence the name trident maple. Fall leaf color can range from yellow to orange to red. The bark on older trunks is gray, brown, and orange-toned and develops a flaking, scaly characteristic. It prefers to grow in well-drained and occasionally dry soil in full sun.

Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) is a native tree reaching a height of 25 to 30 feet tall. Small, white flowers open in June and look like upside-down urns. These fragrant flowers hang from 8 to 10 inches long with slightly drooping stems. Clusters of small, brown fruit persist until late winter. The leaves are shiny green all summer. It has the best red fall color among native

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

trees. The bark color is grayish-brown to brown. It prefers well-drained, slightly acidic soil and grows in full sun or partial shade.

For more information about trees for the landscape, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu. “Trees with Minimal Insect and Disease Problems for Kentucky Landscapes,” HO-94, is available at the local office or at <https://publications.ca.uky.edu/sites/publications.ca.uky.edu/files/ho94.pdf>.

This publication includes important notes about different tree species and a table of problematic tree species.

Annette’s Tip:

To find the suggested trees, contact local nurseries, garden centers, and landscape architects. A plant availability guide from KY wholesale producers is searchable at <http://www.kyagr.com/marketing/plant/plant-guide.html>.

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