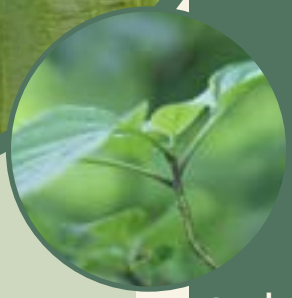
Alternateleaf Dogwood

Cornus Alternifolia



Tree facts

Height: 15-25'
Spread: 20-32'
Light: Full Sun - Part Shade
Moisture: Medium

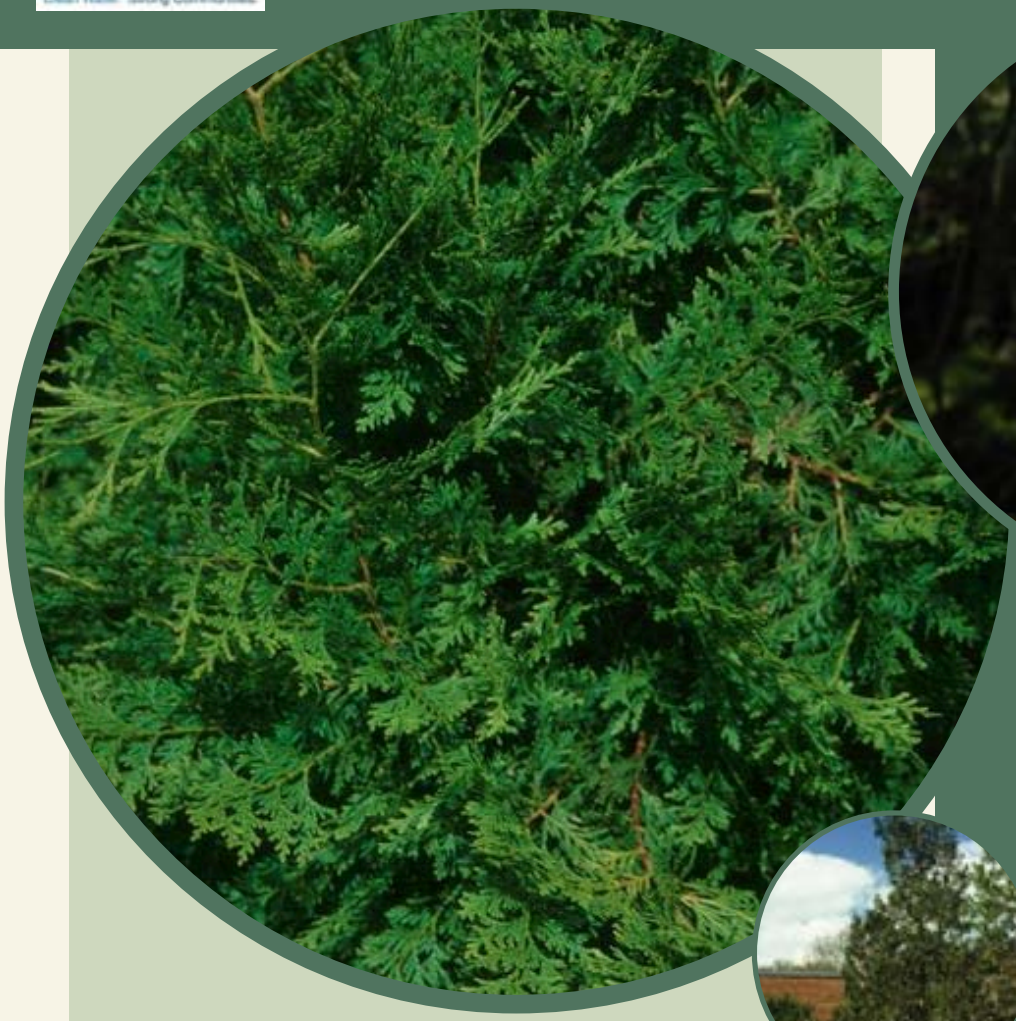
Fun Facts:

Cornus alternifolia is a small deciduous tree or large multi-stemmed shrub that typically grows 15-25′ tall with distinctive tiered/layered horizontal branching which is upward-turned at the tips. It is native to both moist and dry forests, forest margins, stream banks and fields from Newfoundland to Minnesota south to northern Arkansas and through the Appalachians to Georgia and Alabama. Small, fragrant, yellowish-white flowers bloom in flattened cymes (each to 2 1/2" across) in late spring (May-June). Flowers give way to bluish-black fruits (drupes) on red stalks. Fruits mature in late summer. Elliptic-ovate, medium green leaves (to 3-5″ long) turn reddish-purple often tinted yellow or green in fall. Although the leaves of most species of dogwood are opposite, those of pagoda dogwood are alternate, hence the specific epithet and often used common name of alternate-leaf dogwood.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Richard Webb, Bugwood.org; Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Richard Webb, Bugwood.org

Atlantic White Cedar

Chamaecyparis Thyoides



Tree facts

Height: 30-50'
Spread: 30-40'
Light: Full Sun - Part Shade
Moisture: Medium - Wet

Fun Facts:

Chamaecyparis thyoides, known by a number of common names including white cypress, Atlantic cedar or swamp cedar, is a columnar evergreen conifer with a steeple-like crown that typically grows with a straight trunk to 30-50' (less frequently to 90') tall. It is native to freshwater swamps, bogs and wet woods along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida and along the Gulf coast from Florida to Mississippi. It is the State Tree of New Jersey where it may be seen growing in large pure colonies. Scale-like adult leaves and needle-like juvenile leaves are a soft blue green. Yellow pollen-bearing cones are found at the stem ends. Seed bearing cones in clusters emerge purple but mature to brown. Mature bark is reddish brown. Wood has excellent resistance to decay and has been used for a number of purposes including boat construction, shingles and posts.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; Keith Kanoti, Maine Forest Service, Bugwood.org; John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

Slippery Elm

Ulmus Rubra

Tree facts

Height: 50-80'
Spread: 30-50'
Light: Full Sun
Moisture: Medium

Fun Facts:

Ulmus rubra, commonly called slippery elm, is a medium sized, coarse-textured, somewhat weedy, deciduous tree that typically grows to 40-60' (less frequently to 100') tall with a vase-shaped to broad-rounded crown. It is distinguished by its downy twigs, red-hairy buds (particularly noticable in winter) and slimy red inner bark (rubra meaning red). It is native to southern Ontario and to the eastern and central U.S. In Missouri, it typically occurs in dry upland areas or rocky woods and along streams throughout the state (Steyermark). It generally reaches its greatest size in moist bottomland or floodplain soils. Insignificant small reddish-green flowers appear in spring before the foliage emerges. Flowers give way to single-seeded wafer-like samaras (each tiny seed is surrounded by a flattened circular papery wing). Seeds mature in April-May as the leaves reach full size. Broad oblong to obovate, dark green leaves (to 4-8" long) are sandpapery above and hairy beneath with serrate margins and asymetrical bases. Leaves often emerge with a red tinge. Leaves typically turn an undistinguished dull yellow in fall. Common name is in reference to the slippery-sweet, fibrous, red inner bark that Native Americans peeled from twigs and branches in spring for medicinal use to treat fevers, inflammations, wounds and sore throat. Strips of the moist bark were also chewed to quench thirst. Native Americans also used the bark for canoes, particularly when birches were unavailable. Synonymous with Ulmus fulva.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

Cottonwood

Populus Deltoides

Tree facts

Height: 50-80'
Spread: 35-60'
Light: Full Sun
Moisture: Medium to Wet

Fun Facts:

Populus deltoides, commonly called eastern cottonwood, is a large, fast-growing, deciduous tree that typically grows 50-80′ (less frequently to 120′) tall with a broad, open-rounded shaped habit. Yellowish twigs, coarsely toothed leaves and gummy end buds distinguish this from the other poplars. It is native from eastern North America through the Great Plains, typically growing along streams and rivers and in lowland areas and swamps. Settlers who pushed westward into the Great Plains in the 1800s sometimes planted eastern cottonwoods along small streams and creeks. Tiny male and female flowers appear in separate catkins on separate male and female trees (dioecious). Flowers bloom in early spring (March-April) before the foliage emerges. Male flowers are reddish but not showy. Female flowers give way to dehiscent capsules that split open when ripe (May in St. Louis), broadcasting abundant densely-tufted seeds. Seeds with silky white hairs give the appearance of cotton as they blow through the air and along the ground, typically collecting along gutters, curbs, roadsides and fences. Bark on mature trees is ridged and dark gray. Triangular, acuminate, coarsely toothed, glossy dark green leaves (to 5″ long). Leaves turn yellow in fall. Wood is weak and has little commercial value (warps easily) other than for crates, plywood and pulp.

Photos from top left; David Cappaert, Bugwood.org; Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org; Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org; Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org

Black Walnut

Juglans Nigra

Tree facts

Height: 75-100'
Spread: 75-100'
Light: Full Sun
Moisture: Medium

Fun Facts:

Juglans nigra, commonly called black walnut, is a large deciduous tree typically growing 75-100′ (less frequently to 125′) tall with and an oval to rounded crown. Mature trees characteristically have long trunks, often with an absence of lower branching. Fissured, sharply ridged, dark gray-black bark forms diamond patterns. Black walnut is native from Massachusetts through southern Ontario to South Dakota south to Florida and Texas. In Missouri, it typically occurs in rich woods, in valleys along streams and in open upland woods throughout the state (Steyermark). Features odd-pinnate compound leaves (to 24″ long), each with 13-23 oblong to lanceolate leaflets. The terminal leaflet is often missing. Leaves are late to emerge in spring and early to drop in fall. Leaves are strongly aromatic when crushed. Fall color is an undistinguished yellow. Yellow green monoecious flowers appear in late spring (May-June), the male flowers in drooping hairy catkins and the female flowers in short terminal spikes. Female flowers give way to edible nuts, each being encased in a yellow-green husk. Nuts mature in autumn, falling to the ground where the husks blacken as they rot away. Kernels are edible but hard to extract. Black walnuts are harvested for commercial sale. The wood from this tree is highly valued for a number of commercial uses including cabinets, furniture, gunstocks and fine veneers. It is perhaps the best furniture wood available from any native American tree. Overharvesting of trees for the wood has greatly reduced the native populations in the wild. Native Americans used the nuts for food and boiled the tree sap for syrup. They also reportedly threw the husks into ponds to poison fish, making them easier to catch.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Rebekah D. Wallace, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; William M. Ciesla, Forest Health Management International, Bugwood.org; Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Bur Oak

Quercus Macrocarpa

Tree facts

Height: 70-90'
Spread: 60-80'
Light: Part Shade
Moisture: Moderate.
Well-Drained

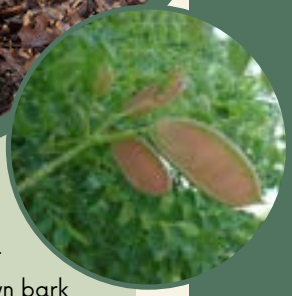
Fun Facts:

Bur oak is named for its furry, "bur like" acorn caps that cover large, gold-ball sized acorns. It may take up to 35 years this tree to bear a first crop of acorns. It is of the white oak group. The leaves of bur oak also are large, so they are easy to rake. This species is resistant to oak wilt and a number of other problems and is capable of withstanding a wide range of harsh conditions (one of the most drought resistant oaks). Twigs are sometimes ridged with corky wings. The bur oak is the "most western of the eastern oaks", extending all the way to the foothills of the Rockies! In general, oaks are a keystone species, meaning that entire ecosystems depend on them for survival. They can live for centuries, providing food and habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife, and cleaning the air for future generations. If you have the space, choose this tree! Leave a legacy of clean air and water!

Photos clockwise from top left; Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org, Ryan Armbrust, Kansas Forest Service, Bugwood.org, T. Davis Sydnor, T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Kentucky Coffeetree

Gymnocladus Dioicus



Tree facts

Height: 60-80'
Spread: 40-55'
Light: Full Sun
Moisture: Medium

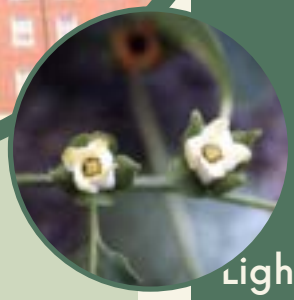
Fun Facts:

Gymnocladus dioicus, commonly called Kentucky coffeetree or coffeetree, is a tall deciduous tree with rough, scaly gray-brown bark and large bipinnate compound leaves. It is native to the Midwest, primarily southern Michigan and Ohio southwest to Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. It grows 60-80′ (less frequently to100′) tall with an irregular open oval to obovate crown. In Missouri, it typically occurs in low or rich woods, bluff bases and along streams (Steyermark). Large leaves to 3′ long, divided into 3-7 pairs of pinnae, with individual leaflets (1-3″ long). Leaflets are blue-green in summer, turning an undistinguished yellow in fall. Larger trees typically cast light shade. As the specific epithet suggests, the species is dioecious (separate male and female trees). Greenish white flowers appear in late spring (May-June). Male flowers in clusters to 4″ long. Female flowers in panicles to 12″ long. Female flowers are fragrant. Fertilized female flowers give way to flattened reddish brown pods (to 10″long) which ripen in October and persist well into winter. Native Americans and early American settlers, especially those in the Kentucky territory, roasted and ground the seeds to brew a coffee-like beverage (albeit no caffeine), hence the common name. Native Americans roasted the seeds for food. Seeds are very toxic prior to roasting, and should never be eaten fresh off the tree. Trees are late to leaf out in spring and are one of the first to drop leaves in the fall.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org; Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Common Persimmon

Diospyros virginiana



Tree facts

Height: 40-60'
Spread: 25-35'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Dry - Medium (well-draining)

Fun Facts:

The American, or common, persimmon produces a sweet, edible fruit best enjoyed after it softens after the first frost in late autumn. When ripe, the sweet fruit somewhat recalls the flavor of dates. Immature fruit contains tannin and are strongly astringent. Persimmons are consumed fresh and are used to make puddings, cakes, and beverages. Because the persimmon is normally dioecious (male and female flowers appear on separate trees), the best way to ensure fruit production is to plant multiple trees. Mature trees are easily identifiable by thick, dark-gray bark that is deeply furrowed and broken into scaly, squarish blocks.

Photos: T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University; Bugwood.org

Sugarberry

Celtis Laevigata

Tree facts

Height: 60-80'
Spread: 60-80'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Medium-Wet

Fun Facts:

Celtis laevigata, commonly called sugarberry, sugar hackberry or southern hackberry, is basically a southern version of common or northern hackberry (see C. occidentalis). Sugarberry differs from common hackberry inter alia by (1) fruits are juicier and sweeter, (2) bark is less corky, (3) leaves are narrower with mostly smooth margins, (4) better resistance to witches' broom and (5) less winter hardiness. Sugarberry is a medium to large sized deciduous tree that typically grows 60-80' (less frequently to 100') tall with upright-arching branching and a rounded spreading crown. Trunk diameter ranges from 1-3' (less frequently to 4'). This tree is native to and widely distributed throughout the southeast and south central U.S. In Missouri, it typically occurs in moist to wet soils along streams and floodplains mostly south of the Missouri River except for the Ozark region. (Steyermark). Mature gray bark develops a warty texture. Insignificant, mostly monoecious, greenish flowers appear in spring (April –May), with male flowers in clusters and female flowers solitary. Female flowers give way to an often abundant fruit crop of round fleshy berry-like drupes maturing to deep purple. Each drupe has one round brown seed within. Fruits are attractive to a variety of wildlife. Birds consume the fruits and disperse the seeds. Fleshy parts of the fruit are edible and sweet. Ovate to oblong-lanceolate, rough-textured, untoothed, glossy to dull green leaves (2-4" long) have mostly uneven leaf bases. Undistinguished yellow fall color.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Paul Langlois, Live Botanical Collections, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org; Madeline Maher, Museum Collections: Plants, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org; Paul Langlois, Live Botanical Collections, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Common Hackberry

Celtis occidentalis

Tree facts

Height: 45-60'
Spread: 40-60'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Dry - Wet

Fun Facts:

The common hackberry is an extremely hardy tree that can tolerate poor conditions. It is generally a medium sized tree but can grow to be over 100' tall in open spaces with rich, moist, forested, alluvial clay soils. The tiny fruit is prized by numerous birds (and technically edible for humans). It was pulverized and made into cakes by Native Americans.

Photos clockwise from top left; T. Davis Sydor - The Ohio State University via Bugwood.org, Rebeckah D. Wallace - University of Georgia via Bugwood.org, Anel Oommen via bugwood.org; Zoe Gensheimer,

Black Gum

Nyssa Sylvatica

Tree facts

Height: 30-50'
Spread: 20-30'
Light:
Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Medium/Wet

Fun Facts:

American elm is a medium to large deciduous tree with a vase-shaped, broad-rounded crown. It is native to eastern and central North America. Although once widely planted as a street and lawn tree, American elm populations have been so decimated by Dutch elm disease that this tree is no longer considered to be a viable selection for landscape uses. 'Princeton' is a true American elm, not a hybrid, but selected from a specimen around 1922 and developed by Princeton Nurseries. It reportedly has excellent resistance to Dutch elm disease and is currently being planted.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Brian Lockhart, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org; Charles T. Bryson, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org;John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

Black Cherry

Prunus serotina

Tree facts

Height: 50-80'
Spread: 30-60'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Medium

Fun Facts:

Prunus serotina, commonly called black cherry, wild cherry or wild rum cherry, is native to eastern North America, Mexico and Central America. In Missouri, it typically occurs in both lowland and upland woods and along streams throughout the state (Steyermark). It is one of the largest of the cherries, typically growing to 50-80′ (less frequently to 100′) tall with a narrow-columnar to rounded crown. It is perhaps most noted for its profuse spring bloom, attractive summer foliage and fall color. Fragrant white flowers in slender pendulous clusters (racemes to 6″ long) appear with the foliage in spring (late April-May). Flowers are followed by drooping clusters of small red cherries (to 3/8″ diameter) that ripen in late summer to dark purple-black. Fruits are bitter and inedible fresh off the tree, but can be used to make jams and jellies. Fruits have also been used to flavor certain liquors such as brandy and whiskey. Fruits are attractive to wildlife. Narrow oblong-ovate to lanceolate, glossy green leaves (to 5″ long) have acuminate tips and serrate margins. Foliage turns attractive shades of yellow and rose in fall. Mature trees develop dark scaly bark. Bark, roots and leaves contain concentrations of toxic cyanogenic compounds, hence the noticeable bitter almond aroma of the inner bark. Native Americans prepared decoctions of the inner bark for cough medicines and tea-like cold remedies. Hard, reddish-brown wood takes a fine polish and is commercially valued for use in a large number of products such as furniture, veneers, cabinets, interior paneling, gun stocks, instrument/tool handles and musical instruments.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (clockwise from left); Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org, Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org, Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org, Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org

Sweetbay Magnolia

Magnolia virginiana

Tree facts

Height: 15-30'
Spread: 15-25'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Moist-Wet

Fun Facts:

Sweetbay magnolia makes an excellent tree for planting next to buildings, in narrow alleys or corridors, or in other urban areas with limited space for horizontal crown expansion. It usually maintains a good, straight central leader, although occasionally the trunk branches low to the ground forming a round multi-stemmed, spreading tree. This tree has extremely high aesthetic and wildlife values. In May, its large, white showy blossoms produce a sweet aroma. Flowers are followed by dark red aggregate fruits exposing bright red seeds that are popular with songbirds. Sweetbays flourish in moist, acid soil such as the swamps in the eastern U.S. and along stream banks.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (clockwise from top left); John Ruter – University of Georgia; Ansel Oommen; Chris Evans – University of Illinois; T. Davis Sydnor – The Ohio State University

American Plum

Prunus Americana

Tree facts

Height: 15-25'
Spread: 15-25'
Light: Part Sun/Shade
Moisture: Dry to Medium, Well Drained

Fun Facts:

American plum is a popular residential landscape tree with fragrant, white flowers in early spring. Late-summer fruits are sweet and juicy, making excellent jams, jellies, preserves and pies. The plums can also be halved, then pitted and dried like prunes, spread in a thin sheet and dried as fruit leather. Fall leaf color ranges from electric red to pale yellow. Regular removal of suckers, or branches growing from the base of the tree, is sometimes necessary to prevent unwanted spread. Trees provide valuable nesting cover and are a host to many butterflies. They tolerate drought, dry soil, and black walnut trees (produces allelopathic chemicals that inhibit the growth of other plants).

Photos (Clockwise from top left): Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org; Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Eastern Redbud

Cercis canadensis

Tree facts

Height: 30-40'
Spread: 25-30'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Moderate-Wet

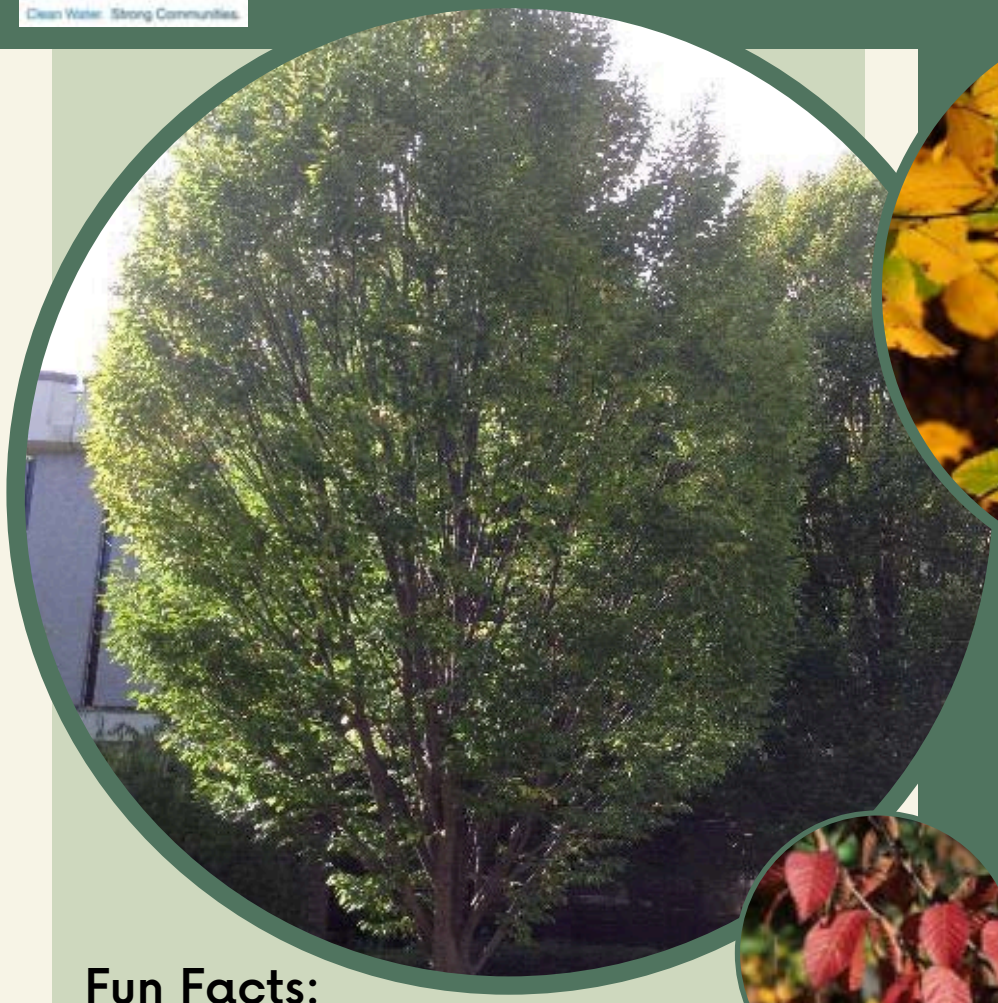
Fun Facts:

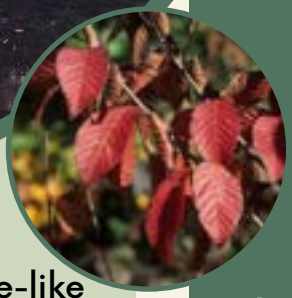
Eastern redbud is a deciduous, often multi-trunked understory tree with a rounded crown. It is particularly noted for its pea-like pink-purple edible flowers which bloom profusely on bare branches in early spring (March-April) before the foliage emerges. Add flowers and flower buds to salads, breads and pancakes. They have a slightly sour taste, but are high in vitamin C. Young pods may be eaten raw, boiled or sauteed. Eastern redbud is overplanted in this region. It is also prone to splitting due to weak branch connections, so pruning of heavy or dead branches it necessary to help keep the tree healthy.

Photos courtesy of bugwood.org (clockwise from top left): John Ruter – University of Georgia; Ryan Armbrust – Kansas Forest Service; David Stephens; Karan A Rawlins – University of Georgia

American Hornbeam

Carpinus caroliniana





Tree facts

Height: 20-35'
Spread: 20-35'
Light: Part Sun/Shade
Moisture: Well-Drained

Fun Facts:

American hornbeam is a slow-growing, medium-sized tree with distinctive muscle-like bark and attractive red-orange fall foliage. It is naturally found as an understory species growing near the forest floor and therefore prefers some shade. It grows well along stream banks and bottomlands and tolerates periodic flooding, though it shows remarkable adaptability to drier, sunnier sites. Other common names include blue beech, water beech, musclewood and ironwood. As the common name suggests, the extremely hard wood of this tree was once used by early Americans to make bowls, tool handles and ox yokes. American hornbeam is the larval host for several native butterflies including the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.

Photos (Clockwise from top left): Sherief Saleh; treegrow; Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org;

Paw Paw

Asimina Triloba

Tree facts

Height: 15-30'
Spread: 15-25'
Light: Full Sun/Part Shade
Moisture: Medium Wet
Fruit: Edible

Fun Facts:

Known as the 'forgotten fruit," pawpaw it is the largest edible native fruit found in the US, and the only temperate member of a tropical family. Harvest paw paws in early fall when fruit is just-soft and they are falling to the ground. The yellowish-green fruits are reminiscent of a mango, with a creamy inside that can be eaten raw or cooked, and include several large, dark-brown seeds. Not particularly showy, but interesting, purple, six-petaled flowers appear before leaf emergence. This is a good understory tree. No serious disease or insect problems. The fruit can create a mess on sidewalks and patios, but this can be minimized by planting only one tree; paw paws seldom set much fruit without cross pollination.

Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org (Clockwise from top left): Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org; Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org; Rebekah D. Wallace, University of Georgia; Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org