

Top Ten Native Fruiting Trees & Shrubs for Wildlife

BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES

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If part of the goal with your landscape is to offer better habitat for wildlife, it's best to have regionally native species as the dominant elements, particularly native woody plants.

Besides their lengthy provision of food for all stages of wildlife sustenance—from dried seeds and berries throughout the entire winter; to abundant summer foliage, flowers and fruits; to early spring nectar sources for pollinators—trees and shrubs also offer the largest and most varied physical shelter for wildlife.

Keeping in mind that there are well over 50 species of native trees and shrubs to choose from, here are ten species that offer some of the best habitat for wildlife. Fortunately they also offer some of the best year-round interest for us, whether we're paying attention to the plants themselves or to the birds and other creatures they draw to our yards.



1. Black cherry, *Prunus serotina*, is a rapidly maturing native tree with fragrant white flowers in spring following by small red cherries that turn black in late summer. At least 47 species eat the fruit, including the eastern bluebird, red-breasted grosbeak, northern flicker. Excellent pollinator plant for early season bee species; larval host for eastern tiger swallowtail and viceroy.
2. Bitternut hickory (PHOTO), *Carya cordiformis*, is a relatively fast-growing hickory with bright yellow fall color and smooth bark. In spring, long-flowering catkins dangle like tinsel. Edible nut. Best growth on deep, rich soils. Larval host for the luna moth, walnut sphinx.
3. Pagoda dogwood, *Cornus alternifolia*, has distinctive horizontal branching. Fragrant, yellow to white flowers in flattened cymes in late spring are followed by black fruits relished by songbirds. Prefers organic, well-drained soils. 15-20.' Native to IA, MN, MO.
4. Downy juneberry, *Amelanchier arborea*, has beautiful snow white flowers bloom in spring that give way to edible dark purple, blueberry-like fruits. Bluish-green leaves turn orange-red in fall. Full to part sun, tolerates a range of soil conditions. Native to SE NE.
5. Dwarf chinkapin oak, *Quercus prinoides*, is native to southeast Nebraska. This low growing, multi-stemmed oak starts producing acorns at a very early age. Good yellow fall color.
6. Chickasaw plum, *Prunus angustifolia*. Profuse flowering and fruiting make this southern Great Plains shrub a nice alternative to wild plum. This species offers a more tree-type growth and doesn't sucker. Can grow to 15' or more. Native to KS, OK, MO.
7. Snowberry, *Symphoricarpos albus*. This thicket-forming shrub is easy to grow in a variety of soils. Its berries ripen in early fall and persist into late fall. It is an important source of late season food for ring-neck pheasant, robin and cedar waxwing, to name a few. Grows 4-6' high and can be pruned back hard each spring.
8. Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*. A native of lowland, swampy areas, this large shrub can grow in a variety of soils and is drought-tolerant. It's a favorite of bees; honey scented; important summer nectar source; waterfowl feast on seedheads in late fall; and a larval host for sphinx moths, tawny-edged skipper and others. Grows 12-15' high.
9. American hazelnut, *Corylus americana*. This easy-to-grow suckering shrub grows naturally along the woodland edge, seldom growing outside the canopy of larger trees. They tolerate full sun, but do best in part shade and shelter from strong winds. Some years they produce copious fruit crops relished by a variety of critters. Can grow up to 10' high and wide.
10. Blackhaw viburnum, *Viburnum prunifolium*. Its blue to black fruits are some of the best for attracting songbirds. Good fall color. Native to southern Great Plains.

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