

# 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. 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 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. And it makes a great shade tree, often reaching over 50' tall.
2. Bitternut hickory, *Carya cordiformis*, is a relatively fast-growing hickory with bright yellow fall color and smooth bark. In spring, long flowering catkins dangle like tinsel. Best growth on deep, rich soils. Larval host for the luna moth, walnut sphinx. Nuts consumed by birds, squirrels and other wildlife.
3. Pagoda dogwood, *Cornus alternifolia*, has distinctive horizontal branching. Fragrant, yellow/white flowers in flattened cymes late spring followed by black fruits relished by songbirds. Prefers organic, well-drained soils. 15-20.' Native to IA, MN, MO. A great accent tree near a deck or patio.
4. Juneberry, Downy, *Amelanchier arborea* - Beautiful snow white flowers bloom in spring and 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. Oak, Dwarf Chinkapin- *Quercus prinoides* – Native to southeast Nebraska, this low growing, multi-stemmed oak starts producing acorns at a very early age. Good yellow fall color. Eventually reaches the size of a redbud tree – 15 to 20' tall and wide.
6. Plum, Chickasaw- *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 reaching up 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 to 4-6' high and can be pruned back hard each spring.
8. Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis* - A favorite of bees; honey scented; important summer nectar source; waterfowl feast on seed heads in late fall. A native of lowland, swampy areas this large shrub can grow in a variety of soils and is also drought tolerant. Grows 12-15' high. Larval host for sphinx moths, tawny-edged skipper, among others.
9. Hazelnut, American, *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 are copious fruit crops relished by a variety of critters. Can grow up to 10' high and wide.
10. Viburnum- blackhaw, *Viburnum prunifolium* - The blue to black fruits are some of the best for attracting songbirds. Good fall color. Becomes a small tree with age. Native to southern Great Plains.

