



10 Fruiting Trees & Shrubs for Wildlife

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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, which provide the most abundant sources of food and the most varied physical shelter for wildlife. Keeping in mind that there are well over 50 species of native trees and shrubs, here are ten that offer some of the best habitat.

Black cherry, *Prunus serotina*, (shown at right) is a rapidly maturing 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.



Bitternut hickory, *Carya cordiformis*, is a relatively fast-growing hickory with bright yellow fall color, smooth bark and an edible nut. In spring, long-flowering catkins dangle like tinsel. Best growth in deep, rich soils. Larval host for the luna moth, walnut sphinx.

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.

Downy juneberry, *Amelanchier arborea*, has snow-white flowers 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.

Dwarf chinkapin oak, *Quercus prinoides*, is a low-growing, multi-stemmed oak that starts to produce acorns at a very early age. Good yellow fall color.

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.

Snowberry, *Symphoricarpos albus*, is a thicket-forming shrub that's easy to grow in a variety of soils. Its berries persist into late fall; and it's an important source of late-season food for ring-neck pheasant, robin and cedar waxwing.

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 and an important summer nectar source; waterfowl feast on seedheads in late fall; and it's a larval host for sphinx moths, tawny-edged skipper and others.

American hazelnut, *Corylus americana*. This easy-to-grow suckering shrub grows naturally along the woodland edge. It tolerates full sun, but does best in part shade and shelter from strong winds. Some years they produce copious fruit crops relished by a variety of critters.

Blackhaw viburnum, *Viburnum prunifolium*. Its blue to black fruits are some of the best for attracting songbirds. Good fall color.

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