

Recommended Native Trees and Shrubs for Naturalization Projects and Gardens



Red Osier Dogwood

The following woody plants are native to southern Ontario and grow naturally in the Upper Thames River watershed (Middlesex, Oxford and Perth Counties). These species are adapted to the local climate and are hardier than non-native species. Some species have very specific sun and moisture requirements, so use the details below to guide your choices.

Light: Shade, Part Shade (PS), Sun

Moisture: Wet (W) (swamp, wetland habitat), Moist (M) (intermediate between wet and dry), Dry (D)

Trees

Common Name	Scientific Name	Light	Moisture	Notes
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	PS	W - M	Poisonous to horses
Silver Maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Sun	W - M	Avoid near tiles
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	PS	M	Great shade tree
Downy Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	PS	M - D	Small tree, berries
Pawpaw (R, C)	<i>Asimina triloba</i>	Shade	W - M	Edible fruit
Yellow Birch	<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>	PS	W - M	Aromatic
Paper Birch, White Birch	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Sun	W - D	Short lived
Blue-beech	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	Shade	M	Small tree
Bitternut Hickory	<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	PS	M	Nut tree
Shagbark Hickory	<i>Carya ovata</i>	PS	M	Nut tree
Common Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	PS	M	Berries for wildlife
Alternate-leaved Dogwood	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	PS	M	Small, graceful tree
Ash species	<i>Fraxinus spp.</i>			Unavailable due to Emerald Ash Borer
Kentucky Coffee-tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	PS	M	Large seed pods
Black Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Sun	M	Allelopathic, nuts
Tamarack	<i>Larix laricina</i>	PS	W - D	Drops needles in fall
Tulip Tree	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Sun	W - M	Showy flower
Eastern Hop-hornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Shade	M	Small tree

Trees Continued

Common Name	Scientific Name	Light	Moisture	Notes
Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	PS	W - M	Seeds for wildlife
Eastern White Pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	Sun	M - D	Evergreen
Eastern Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>	Sun	M	Very large tree
Trembling Aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	Sun	M - D	Spreads
Black Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Sun	M - D	Berries for wildlife
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	PS	M	Nuts for wildlife
Swamp White Oak	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	PS	W - M	Nuts for wildlife
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	PS	M	Hosts native insects
Northern Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	PS	M - D	Colourful fall foliage
Eastern White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	PS	W - D	Good for windbreaks
Basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i>	PS	M	Flowers attract bees
Eastern Hemlock	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Shade	M (cool)	Requires shade
Elm species	<i>Ulmus spp.</i>	PS	M	Prone to disease



Basswood trunk



Kentucky Coffee-tree pods



Tamarack needles

Shrubs

Common Name	Scientific Name	Light	Moisture	Notes
Serviceberries	<i>Amelanchier spp.</i>	PS	M	Berries for wildlife
Black Chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Sun	W - M	Berries for wildlife
Eastern Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	PS	W	Flowers attract butterflies
Grey Dogwood	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Sun	M	Attracts pollinators
Red-osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Sun	W - M	Red branches
Hazelnuts	<i>Corylus spp.</i>	PS	M	Nuts
American Witch-hazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	PS	M - D	Late fall flower
Northern Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Shade	W - M	Aromatic foliage
Eastern Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	PS	M	Seeds in capsules
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	PS	M	Berries for wildlife
Fragrant Sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Sun	D	Fragrant foliage
Staghorn Sumac	<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Sun	M - D	Red fall foliage
American Black Currant	<i>Ribes americanum</i>	Shade	W - M	Edible fruit
Smooth Rose	<i>Rosa blanda</i>	Sun	M - D	Prickly stem
Carolina Rose	<i>Rosa carolina</i>	Sun	D	Showy flower
Peach-leaved Willow	<i>Salix amygdaloides</i>	Sun	W - M	Searches for tiles
Bebb's Willow	<i>Salix bebbiana</i>	Sun	W - M	Early nectar for bees
Pussy Willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>	Sun	W - M	Showy male catkins
Sandbar Willow	<i>Salix interior</i>	Sun	W - M	Bank erosion control
Common Elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	PS	W - M	Edible berries
White Meadowsweet	<i>Spiraea alba</i>	Sun	W - M	Nice flower
American Bladdernut	<i>Staphylea trifolia</i>	PS	M - D	Unique pod
Maple-leaved Viburnum	<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	Shade	M	Showy flower
Nannyberry	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	PS	W - M	Showy flower, berries
Highbush Cranberry	<i>Viburnum opulus var. americanum</i>	PS	Moist	Red fall foliage



Chokecherry berries



Elderberry berries



Elderberry flowers

Notes

In the wild, trees and shrubs often grow in specific situations such as woodland edges or dry, rocky outcrops because of competition with other species, but most species prefer or do very well on moist, fertile soils.

Most native trees and shrubs are beneficial for wildlife. Their flowers are visited by pollinators and their fruits, seeds and nuts are eaten by birds and wildlife. Their bark and leaves shelter insects that attract birds.

Non-native species or cultivated varieties of native trees and shrubs from commercial nurseries are often acceptable as single plantings in urban gardens, but not for naturalization or reforestation projects.

Information Sources:

- Shrubs of Ontario by Soper and Heimbürger, 1985, Royal Ontario Museum publication
- Trees in Canada by John Laird Farrar, 2017, Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, and Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited
- ontariotrees.com

Additional information at thamesriver.on.ca:

- [Recommended Native Wildflowers and Grasses](#)
- [Nurseries that Sell Native Plants and Seeds in Southwestern Ontario](#)
- [Invasive Non-native Plants](#)

UPPER THAMES RIVER

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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