

North St. Louis SWCD Tree Sale Species Descriptions

Clicking on the underlined name of each species will bring you to the USDA Plants Database listing for that species.



[Birch, Paper](#) (white canoe birch) (*Betula papyrifera*)

Paper birch has chalky, creamy white bark that peels into strips. It has a fairly rapid growth rate and can reach a height of 50 to 70 feet with a crown spread of 30 to 50 feet at maturity (80 years). Multiple trunks are common for open-grown plants. Paper birch has an upright oval form. It prefers sandy loams with a pH range of 5.0 to 8.0, but will tolerate a variety of soil types. Plant in cool, moist, well-drained sites. The paper birch is shade and drought intolerant. Dark green leaves turn yellow in the fall. It is susceptible to the bronze birch borer, leaf miner, canker and decay. Uses include wildlife plantings, horticultural applications (specimen tree) and commercial products. Do not plant near power lines.



[Birch, River](#) (*Betula nigra* L.)

River Birch is a fast-growing, shade tree that is popular for its ornamental peeling bark. It has a moderate to fast growth rate and reaches a height of 40 to 70 feet tall. It is short-lived in urban areas, lasting 30 to 40 years. It lives longer when planted in moist areas. Seeds ripen in May and June, and are a popular food source for many bird species. Thanks to its shallow roots system, river birch is easy to transplant.



[Cherry, Pin](#) (*Prunus pensylvanica*)

Pin cherry is also known as fires cherry because it commonly grows in areas recently disturbed by fire. It can be in the form of a shrub or small tree up to 30 feet tall. It is usually short with multiple stems. Delicate white flowers turn into red to black berries. It can tolerate a variety of soil conditions, from dry rocky ledges, to rich loams, and pH from 5.2 to 8.4. It has moderate drought tolerance and is intolerant of shade. It is excellent for wildlife plantings and the berries are edible. Fine to plant near powerlines.



[Chokeberry, Black](#) (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

Black chokeberry is a cold-hardy shrub which can grow to a height 3 to 6 feet tall. The best growth and fruit production occur on low moist but well-drained sites, in full sun. It is not drought-tolerant. It is useful in landscape plantings, showing white flowers in the spring and colorful red foliage and heavy, dark fruit in the fall. High-antioxidant berries can be canned whole or the juice extracted for jelly making. Fruit can persist into winter and serves as a food source for birds and other wildlife.



[Crabapple, Red Splendor](#) (*Malus* hybrid)

Red Splendor Crabapple is a semi-weeping, spreading tree with dark reddish green foliage turning reddish purple in fall. It prefers full sun and does best on well-drained, moist soils. It has a moderate growth rate and reaches a height of 10 to 25 feet. Crabapples provide fair cover and high-quality fruit and browse for many birds and a wide variety of animals. The apples make great cider, jelly, and sauce.



[Cranberry, Highbush](#) American Cranberrybush (*Viburnum trilobum*)

Highbush Cranberry is related to Nannyberry, not the bog cranberries we eat at Thanksgiving. It has a moderate growth rate and reaches a height and a crown spread of up to 16 feet. Highbush cranberry grows on most soil types, but prefers cool conditions on moist, well-drained soils. It does well in full sun but is fairly shade tolerant. The fruit is edible and can be used for preserves. High bush cranberry is susceptible to bean aphid, snowball aphid and leaf spot. Uses include; wildlife planting, horticultural planting (screens, shrub borders).



Maple, Red (*Acer rubrum*)

Red maple is a moderate to fast growing tree, obtaining maturity in 70 to 80 years, and reaching heights of 50 to 70 feet and a crown spread of 40 to 60 feet. Red maple has an oval to round crown. This tree prefers slightly acid (pH of 4.5 to 7.5) sandy loams that are well drained, but will tolerate other conditions. Red maple will grow in partial shade but does best in full sun and is moderately tolerant of drought conditions. Lobed leaves are a bright green and develop beautiful fall colors ranging from yellow to orange to vivid red. Small red flowers appear early in spring before the leaves unfold. Seeds (winged) ripen in late April to mid-June. It is susceptible to scale, gall, tussock, looper, tar spot, canker and wilt. Uses include; wildlife plantings (very good to excellent), horticultural practices (specimen tree), wood products and maple syrup. Do not plant near power lines.



Maple, Sugar (*Acer saccharum*)

Sugar maple is a moderate to slow growing tree. It can reach heights of 100 feet on the best sites. It prefers slightly acidic (3.7 to 7.9 pH) soils with medium to coarse texture. Sugar maple is very shade tolerant but will have slower growth in limited light. Leaves turn yellow-gold in the fall. It is susceptible to several stem and leaf diseases, as well as frost crack in the winter. It can be useful as a wildlife planting, for wood products, to provide shade, and harvest maple syrup.



Oak, Red (*Quercus rubra*)

Red oak is a relatively long-lived tree with a moderate growth rate. It can reach heights of 80 feet or more. It prefers well drained upland soils and can handle a pH from 4.3 to 7.3. Best growth is in full sun, but red oak is moderately shade tolerant. Leaves turn bright red in the fall. Acorns are excellent wildlife food, and trees produce a good crop every 2-5 years, starting at age 20. Red oak can be planted as a wildlife tree, to provide shade, or to produce wood products.



[Plum, American](#) (*Prunus Americana*)

This small rapid-growing shrub or tree matures in 35 to 65 years and reaches a height of 10 to 15 feet with a broad spreading crown. The American plum prefers a pH of 6.5 - 6.6 and well drained deep prairie loam, but will tolerate sand or gravelly soils and a fairly wide range of soil pH conditions. Shade intolerant, but can tolerate drought conditions. Dark green leaves turn pale golden-yellow in the fall. Armed with short thorn-like spur branches, showy white fragrant flowers appear in April or May. Large edible fruit (1 to 1 1/2 inches) ripens in August or September and is red, orange or yellow. Susceptible to black knot, brown rot, plum pocket, fire blight, eastern tent caterpillar and ugly nest caterpillar. Uses include; wildlife plantings and horticultural applications.



[Rose, Rugosa](#) (*Rosa rugosa*)

Rugosa Roses are a low spreading shrub, usually not more than 5 feet tall. Dense thorny growth makes for an effective hedge or fence line. Showy pink flowers have fewer petals than cultivated roses. It prefers full sun and sandy, light textured soils, and has a high drought tolerance. Tolerant of salt spray, making it a good roadside planting. Rose hips are high in vitamin C and can be made into teas or jam. It has moderate wildlife value as cover and pollinator habitat. These roses are also often planted for erosion control.



[Serviceberry](#) (Juneberry) (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)

Juneberry (also known as Saskatoon and serviceberry) is a thicket-forming (root sucker) shrub or tree that has a moderate growth rate reaching a height up to 10 feet with a crown spread of 5 to 8 feet. The tree form is oval to irregular and the plant can be pruned into a single small tree. Juneberry prefers moist well-drained soil with a pH of 7.0. It prefers full sun but tolerates partial shade. White showy flowers in early spring produce an edible bluish-purple fruit 1 inch in diameter that ripens in mid-summer. Juneberry is susceptible to leaf minor, wooly aphids, bores, rust, witches broom, fire blight, leaf spot and mildew. Uses include; wildlife plantings, horticultural applications (landscaping and borders).



Willow, Peachleaf (wright willow, almond willow)
(*Salix amygdaloides*)

Peachleaf willow grows in riparian areas such as the banks of streams and ponds, low woods, roadside gullies and prairie sloughs. It is a small to medium size tree with one to several trunks up to 40 feet tall. The twigs are gray to light yellow, shiny and flexible. The leaves look like peach leaves. It flowers, fruits, and disperses seeds in the spring and attracts bees, other beneficial insects and wildlife.



Cedar, White (*Thuja occidentalis*)

White cedar (also called arborvitae) commonly overhangs our area rivers and lakeshores. It has a slow to moderate growth rate and can reach a height of 40 to 50 feet with a crown spread of 10 to 20 feet at maturity (200 years). White cedar has a dense columnar to pyramidal shape; the main trunk often divides into several leaders. It prefers a pH of 6.0 to 8.0 and soils that are fine clay, medium loams to moderately coarse sandy loams that are not limestone. Will grow in wet or dry soils. White cedar is moderately tolerant to shade and can withstand drought conditions. Needles are a soft yellow-green to bright green and may turn yellow brown in the winter. Fruit is a small light brown cone that matures in the fall. It is susceptible deer browse, and to spider mite, root weevil, blight and canker. Uses include; wildlife plantings (very good), wood products, and the inside row of shelterbelts (excellent). Do not plant near power lines.



Pine, Jack (*Pinus banksiana*)

Jack pine has the shortest needles of the pine varieties, occurring in pairs that fork out like jackrabbit ears. Rapid growth rate at first then slows until it reaches a mature height of 30 -80 feet. Seedlings need direct sun; they do not tolerate shade and prefer moist, well-drained soils. They can tolerate sandy soils with low nutrient levels and little organic matter. Though often portrayed as small, scraggly and short-lived, specimens in favorable conditions can reach 100' tall and are known to have lived over 200 years. Fair to good wildlife value for birds and mammals while trees are young. Do not plant near power lines.



Pine, Norway (Red) (*Pinus resinosa*)

Norway (Red) Pine is our Minnesota State Tree! It is moderate to fast growing, and reaches a height of 50 to 80 feet and a crown spread of 20 to 40 feet at maturity (200 to 300+ years).

Norway pine is pyramidal when young, developing an oval crown with a unique tufted appearance with age. Needles are medium green to yellow green. It prefers slightly acidic, sandy soils that are moist and well drained with a pH range of 4.5 to 6.0, but will grow in poor, dry soil and is cold winter hardy. Norway pine is shade intolerant and moderately tolerant of drought conditions. It is very susceptible to salt damage. It is susceptible to weevil, sawfly, budworm, scale, shoot moth, spittlebug, rust, canker, blight and root rot. Uses include; wildlife plantings (good), wood products, landscaping (specimen tree) and Christmas trees (second most popular). Do not plant near power lines.



Pine, White (*Pinus strobus*)

White pine is known as whispering pine for the sound of wind through its lofty branches. It is the tallest conifer in Minnesota. This tree has a rapid growth rate and reaches a height of 80 to 100 feet with a crown spread of 50 to 80 feet at maturity (200 to 300 years). White pine has a somewhat pyramidal form when young and becomes broad with age. It prefers well drained moist loam, silt loam or loamy sand soils, but will do well in a variety of soils. Its pH preference is 4.5 to 6.5. White pine can grow in partial shade but is intolerant of drought conditions. White pine is susceptible to white pine blister rust (do not plant near currant or gooseberry bushes) and deer browse; bud-capping is recommended. Uses include wildlife plantings, landscaping, and wood products. Do not plant near power lines.



Spruce, Black (*Picea mariana*)

Black spruce is the only conifer that thrives in wet or poorly drained soils, but it can be found on dry sites in unique locations. It is slow-growing, reaching a height of 25-50' and living 125-150 years or more, and intolerant of shade. Small to medium pyramidal shape with sparse upper drooping branches. Can have many dead lower branches. Purple pine cones will remain on the tree for up to 15 years. Fire causes cones to open, dispersing seeds. Do not plant near power lines.



Spruce, White (*Picea glauca*)

White spruce is a fairly rapid growing evergreen tree, reaching heights of 40 to 80 feet and a crown spread of 20 to 30 feet at maturity. It is densely pyramidal in shape. White spruce prefers moist, well-drained medium to fine textured soils, but will grow in a variety of soils with a pH range of 4.5 to 7.5. White spruce is shade tolerant and moderately tolerant of drought conditions. Needles are dusty green to blue-green, and the spruce cones are 1 to 2 1/2 inches long and rarely persist through winter. White spruce is susceptible to sawfly, budworm, spider mite, adelgid, dwarf mistletoe, rust and root rot. Uses include; wildlife plantings, shelterbelts, Christmas trees, landscaping, and wood products. Do not plant near power lines.



Dogwood, Redosier (*Cornus Sericea*)

Red osier dogwood makes its most striking displays in winter, when bright-red twigs contrast against sky and snow. This shrub has a moderately fast growth rate and can reach a height of 10 feet with a crown spread of up to 12 feet. Red-osier is a broad erect grower that is a many stemmed, thicket-forming shrub seldom with a single trunk. It is tolerant of diverse soil types and withstands poorly drained soils, preferring wet sites. Redosier dogwood grows well in either full sun or shade but is not tolerant of hot droughty locations. Leaves are medium to dark green turning yellow-orange to purple-red in fall. 2 to 3 inch flat-topped clusters of small white flowers appear in late May or early June. Small white berry clusters mature August to September and are readily eaten by birds. Uses include; wildlife plantings (excellent, one of the best choices available), horticultural applications (hedge, shrub border, attractive winter red stem color) and soil stabilization.



Fir, Balsam (*Abies balsamea*)

Balsam fir is most tolerant of shady areas. With a moderate to rapid growth rate, its mature height is 40-60 feet and crown spread is 20-35 feet with shallow wide spreading roots. It prefers medium soils, loams, silt loams & clay loams It will grow more slowly in gravelly sands and peat swamps. Excellent for birds and severe weather cover for mammals, although a target for damage by sapsuckers. Do not plant near power lines.