

2024 Brief Descriptions of Species

Evergreens:

Canaan Fir – *Abies intermedii*

Canaan fir is an attractive medium-sized tree generally reaching 40-55 feet in height and 20-25 feet in width. It exhibits a relatively dense, pyramidal crown with a slender spire-like tip. An important asset of Canaan fir is its ability to grow in areas not well suited to other native firs, but will not do well in heavy, **wet**, clay soils. In recent years, considerable interest has developed in using Canaan fir as a Christmas tree species.

Norway Spruce – *Picea abies*

This hardy spruce is a fairly fast growing evergreen that can reach a mature height of 80'+ and a naturally pyramidal spread of 25-30'. Its dark green needles make it a fine landscape specimen or very effective as screen plantings. Norway spruce will not tolerate excessive moisture for prolonged periods.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/needle-like-leaves/Norway-Spruce-Picea-abies>

White Pine – *Pinus strobus* (native)

The White Pine is a fast growing (2-3 ft per year or more) evergreen that has needles of from 3-6 inches long and are arranged in bundles of five on the stem. In Sep-Oct this pine “sheds “ all of its needles that grew out the previous year. It will grow to 80 feet tall by 40 feet wide or larger under optimum conditions, with a rapid growth rate. Its shape is upright pyramidal when young but becomes irregular with maturity. The White Pine performs best in evenly moist, rich, well-drained, acidic soils in full sun.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/needle-like-leaves/white-pine-pinus-strobus>

Hardwoods:

American Chestnut – *Castanea dentata*

American Chestnut was predominately located in the eastern half of Ohio, where the soils are more acidic. Its nuts were a staple food of the Native Americans and pioneers, while its wood was harvested for the production of furniture, musical instruments, caskets, crates, and tannin. Dimensions of 80 feet tall by 60 feet wide were regularly obtained when it was located in the open. As a member of the Beech Family, it is related to the Oaks and the Beeches, in addition to other Chestnuts.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/broad-leaf-trees/American-chestnut-Castanea-dentata>

American Plum – *Prunus americana*

known as Wild Plum, is present throughout all of Ohio, and is native to most of the eastern and central United States. Its fruits are sweet when fully ripe, and make excellent jelly or jam due to their high pectin and high acid content. American Plum reaches 20 feet tall by 25 feet wide as an individual specimen under optimum conditions, but forms thickets of indeterminate width with time.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/broad-leaf-trees/American-Plum-Prunus-americana>

Black Elderberry – *Sambucus nigra L. ssp. Canadensis (L.) R. Bolli*

Black elder is a loose, graceful, deciduous shrub with both woody and herbaceous branches to 12 ft. Many long stems arise from the base, arching at the top. Broad, white pith in stems and branches. Flowers white, 3/16 to 1/4 inch across, in broad, flat, conspicuous clusters up to 10 inches or more in diameter, appearing from May to July. Fruit berrylike, dark purple when ripe, 3/16 to 1/4 inch wide, edible.

https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/sambucus_nigra_1.shtml

2024 Brief Descriptions of Species - cont.

7. **Pussy Willow** – *Salix discolor*

Silvery flowers bloom in late winter. The flowers provide pollen for native bees very early in the season and are conspicuous because they bloom on bare stems, before leaves appear. Finches and cardinals find the flower buds tasty. Several different butterflies use the blue-green leaves as a larval food source. If planted in dense clumps, this multi-stemmed shrub provides good cover and nesting sites for a variety of birds. Prefers full sun. Grows well in most soil, including wet, poorly drained areas.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/shrub/saldis/all.html>

8. **River Birch** – *Betula nigra*

River birch is a 30-50 ft., usually multi-trunked tree which can reach 90 ft. in height. River birch is fast growing and long-lived and is probably our most trouble-free birch. The tree's selling point is its satiny, silver bark that peels to reveal a cinnamon-brown trunk beneath. Its ability to thrive on moist sites makes it useful for erosion control.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/broad-leaf-trees/river-birch-Betula-nigra>

9. **Shagbark Hickory** – *Carya ovata*

Rare are the Union County woodlots that do not boast this native and truly “American” tree. Found throughout the county, it often appears as a majority species in many woodlots. With maturity it develops naturally re-curving bark and produces edible hickory nuts that are beloved by wildlife and people. Strong and hard, it also makes great firewood.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/broad-leaf-trees/shagbark-hickory-Carya-ovata>

10. **Sugar Maple** – *Acer saccharum*

Another Union County native, Sugar Maple can be expected to grow across Union County – except in areas of extended seasonal wetness. This maple is the most efficient at producing maple syrup. Growth habit includes a broad canopy and beautiful fall color. It prefers plenty of space and sunlight. Will tolerate shade with subsequent slower growth.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/broad-leaf-trees/Sugar-Maple-Acer-saccharum>

11. **Swamp White Oak, or “Bicolor Oak”**– *Quercus bicolor*

If Union County had an official tree, this would be an excellent candidate. While it is tolerant of extended seasonal wetness, this white oak family tree is just as much “at home” on higher and drier sites. It is used as a tree lawn tree where space is afforded, but grows anywhere adequate space will permit (Mature height 60’, with a 50-60’ wide crown). Swamp white oak has recently been referred to as “Bicolored Oak” in the landscape industry - taking from its scientific second name of *bicolor*. This reference is to the summer’s glossy green leaves that are silvery white on the backside.

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/broad-leaf-trees/swamp-white-oak-Quercus-bicolor>