

2026 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.

White Pine (native): *Pinus strobus*

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.

White Spruce: *Picea glauca*

This non-native spruce, to 60' high and 20' wide, is more tolerant of heavier clay soils and wetness than the Norway spruce. It is slower growing than Norway spruce and has a symmetrical shape with blue-green needles. The primary benefit locally is that it will better tolerate the acidic heavy clays. It will not survive extended seasonal wetness.

Hardwoods/ Shrubs:

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.

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.

Black Cherry: *Prunus serotina*

A rapidly growing woodland tree common throughout all of Ohio, is often found in open fields and previously harvested forests. Its small fruits are relished by birds and mammals as a food source in late summer. Also known as Wild Black Cherry, this tree may grow to 60 feet tall by 30 feet wide (or larger) when it is found in an open field.

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Bald Cypress: *Taxodium distichum*

The Bald Cypress is a large, deciduous coniferous tree native to the southeastern United States. It is well-known for its adaptability to wetland environments and is the personification of a swamp tree. Bald Cypress trees prefer moist to wet soil conditions and are highly adaptable to different soil types, including loam, clay, and sandy soils. They can tolerate both full sun and partial shade, although they generally grow best in full sun. Bald Cypress trees are well-suited for planting in wetland areas, near streams, or in landscapes where moisture retention is favorable.

Blackhaw Viburnum: *Viburnum prunifolium*

Blackhaw is perhaps the most widely distributed Viburnum in Ohio, as it is found throughout the state, ranging from shady mesic woodlands to open, dry fields. Blackhaw has plump floral buds on arching branches in winter, white flowers in mid-spring, glossy foliage in summer, and combination of colorful foliage and fruits in autumn make it a native shrub with four-season appeal. Blackhaw slowly reaches 15 feet tall by 10 feet wide when found in the open, and if limbed up into tree form, may reach 20 feet tall by 15 feet wide. As a member of the Honeysuckle Family, it is related to the Honeysuckles, Elderberries, Weigelas, and the multitude of other Viburnums.

Paper Birch: *Betula papyrifera*

The Paper Birch tree is considered to be one of the most attractive tree species in North America. Its' handsome summer and fall foliage, graceful form and showy white bark keep this Birch species in demand for landscaping applications. Paper Birch was once used by northern Native Americans to build canoes and is also known as 'Canoe Birch'. It should not be pruned during late winter through spring due to the copious bleeding that occurs from sap rising during that time of the year. Union County would be considered to be at the southernmost range of its area of growth.

Downy Serviceberry: *Amelanchier arborea*

The white flowers of the Downy Serviceberry bloom in early spring and turn to red berries in summer that turn purple or black as they ripen. Commonly called juneberries, these edible berries can be used in jams, jellies, and pies. This large shrub/small tree reaches 15-25' in height, prefers full sun to partial shade, and is tolerant of a range of soil conditions.

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,

Swamp White 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.