

Native Trees And Shrubs

designing for biodiversity



By Liz Benneian

What Is A Native Plant?



A native plant can best be described as a plant that was growing here before Europeans arrived. They have evolved, over thousands of years as part of a natural, healthy ecosystem.



Why Are Native Plants Important?

Because they support local wildlife.

They feed the insects and larvae that in turn feed our songbirds.

They provide berries for birds and small mammals.

They provide nuts and seeds and forage for many animals.

One Striking Example of Non-Native Plants Impact On Biodiversity



Non-native Norway Maples feed 2 native species compared to Native White Oaks that feed about 500 species. Norway Maples form about 14% of our urban forests.

Benefits To The Gardener

In general, native plants are not fussy and therefore require less care — they evolved to thrive in local conditions.

They require less watering.

They attract life to your garden.

You can use them as formally or as informally as you would like. Wildflower gardens don't need to look wild . . . of course, they don't need to look tame either.

You don't need to be a purist. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. Add them in wherever you have space.





Tulip Tree: *Liriodendron tulipifera*

The Tulip tree is sometimes known as the dinosaur tree because it has existed since the late Cretaceous.

Important tree for bees, moths and other insects.

Best tree for removing pollution from the air.

An excellent shade tree.

Not susceptible to many pests or diseases.

Can live to 400+ years.

Wood was used by indigenous people to make canoes.

Tulip Tree: *Liriodendron tulipifera*



Sun to Part Shade

Prefers sandy loam, well-drained soil

Prefers regular watering during growing season

Fast-growing

Grows to 30 metres

Produces yellow tulip-shaped flowers with red stripes

Best tree for removing pollution from the air

Important food source for birds and small animals

Black Cherry: *Prunus serotina*



Full Sun

Tolerates variety of soil

Tolerates various moisture

Fast-growing

Grows to 22 metres

Produces white blooms in spring

Dark red bitter cherries in fall

Berries are a very important food source for many animals especially birds.

Food source for many kinds of butterflies. Loved by pollinators.

Black Cherry: *Prunus serotina*



White Oak: *Quercus alba*



Prefers full sun

Tolerates various soils

Tolerates various moisture

Medium-growing

Grows to 35 metres

Can live up to 500+ years

Almost 500 native species from insects to large mammals feed from this tree

Red Oak: *Quercus rubra*



Full Sun; can tolerate some shade

Tolerates variety of soil

Tolerates various moisture

Medium growth rate

Grows 20 to 30 metres

Needs room to grow

Will usually hang onto its dead leaves through winter.

Its acorns feed a wide variety of wildlife.

Many insects, that in turn feed our birds, feed on its leaves.



Northern Hackberry: *Celtis occidentalis*

Full sun to partial shade

Tolerates all soils

Likes moist conditions but is very adaptable

Fast growing

Grows to 15 metres

Good replacement for elms

Good shade tree. Can grow as wide as tall.

Sugar-rich fruit supports many birds and many caterpillars feed on its leaves.

Turns yellow in fall.



Freeman Maple:

Acer X freemanii

Naturally occurring hybrid of silver and red maple

Prefers full sun

Prefers well-drained soils

Tolerates various moisture

Very fast-growing

Grows to 24 metres

Great fall colour.

Disease and pest resistant.

Provides good cover for birds and attracts many pollinators.

Sugar Maple: *Acer saccharum*



Most shade tolerant of all large deciduous trees

Tolerates any soil but very sandy

Doesn't tolerate salt

“Hydraulic lift”

Fast growing

Grows to 25 to 35 metres

Can live 400 years

Leaves provide food for a variety of insects and larva

Outstanding fall colour



Cherry Birch: *Betula lenta*

This tree is Endangered and native only to the Niagara Region with as few as 14 specimens left at last survey.

Full Sun

Prefers moist, well-drained soils

Tolerates various moisture

Fast-growing

Grows to 20 metres

Can live to 200 years

Better choice than Paper birch which doesn't like heat or humidity and doesn't do well in this area.

Cherry Birch: *Betula lenta*

Self pollinating. Each tree produces both male and female flowers, borne on separate catkins. Isolated individuals are able to produce fruit.

Original source of birch beer and oil of wintergreen, a preservative and medicinal rub.

Can be tapped like sugar maples but the resulting syrup is more like Molasses.

Feeds dozens of butterflies and moths like this White Admiral.





Paw Paw: *Asimina triloba*

Unique Carolinian species related to tropical custard apple family

Prefers part shade to full shade

Prefers rich, loam soils

Prefers moist to wet soils

Fast-growing

Grows to 10 metres

Produces maroon bell-shaped flowers in spring and an abundance of palm-sized green-purple fruits in the fall

Fruit is insect and disease resistant



Paw Paw: *Asimina triloba*

Paw Paw is a wonderful and rare Carolinian tree that provides an abundance of fruit with a taste described as a combination of banana, mango and cream



A close-up photograph of a Witch Hazel flower cluster. The flowers have long, thin, yellow petals and dark red, almost purple, centers. The background is a soft-focus view of the same plant, showing more flower clusters and some green foliage.

Witch Hazel: *Hamamelis virginiana*

Only tree in North America to have flowers, ripe fruit and next year's leaf buds on its branches at the same time.

Prefers partial shade but will grow in full sun

Prefers moist well-drained soils.

Subject to drought-stress

Protect from browsers in early years

Grows to 8 metres

Golden leaves in fall.

Very fragrant blooms in early spring.

Many medicinal uses.