Native Plants for Alabama

Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines
What are native plants?

- Plants that grow naturally in a particular region without direct or indirect human intervention
- Plants that were present in a particular area prior to European settlement
- Plants that have inhabited a particular region for thousands of years
- Plants naturally occurring, either presently or historically, in any ecosystem of the United States.
Naturalized Setting

Why use native plants?

- Wildlife habitat
- Adapted to local conditions
- Ecological preservation
MEDIUM AND LARGE TREES
Red Maple
*Acer rubrum*

Somewhat overused in southern landscape
Sugar Maple
Acer saccharum

Fine specimen tree in moist well drained sites – try “Legacy”
River Birch

*Betula nigra*

Fast growth – somewhat messy – try “Duraheat”
American Yellowwood

*Cladrastis kentukea* (syn. *Cladrastis lutea*)

Medium size – fragrant beautiful blooms in late spring – golden fall color
American Holly
*Ilex opaca*
Black Walnut

*Juglans nigra*
Eastern Red Cedar

*Juniperus virginiana*

Trees are either male or female (but rarely have both cones on the same tree)

Needs full sun – tolerant of poor soils and a wide pH range
Tulip Poplar or Yellow Poplar

*Liriodendron tulipifera*

Med/Fast growth – leaves tulip shaped and fragrant orange to yellow blooms – moist deep soils

Credit: Chris Evans
Southern Magnolia
*Magnolia grandiflora*

Needs ample moisture – med/slow growth

Smaller Cultivars: Little Gem and DD Blanchard,
Loblolly Pine
*Pinus taeda*

Full sun – fast grower – poor soils

Credit: Hugh and Carol Nourse
Virginia Pine

*Pinus virginiana*

Good screen plant or Christmas tree species
Sycamore
*Platanus occidentalis*

Fast grower – weak wood – beautiful bark – insect/disease prone
White Oak
*Quercus alba*

Slow/medium growth rate
Stately appearance – well drained but moist soils preferred
Scarlet Oak

*Quercus coccinea*

Medium/fast grower – difficult to transplant – dry sites
Southern Red Oak

*Quercus falcata*

Fairly fast grower
adapted to dry sites
Water Oak
Quercus nigra

Relatively weak wood for an oak – shorter lived as well
Willow Oak
*Quercus phellos*

Do not use near concrete – shallow heaving roots

Credit: Ed McDowell
Shumard Oak (a southern red oak species *Quercus shumardii*)

Fast Growing Shade tree and transplants easily
Live Oak

*Quercus virginiana*

Evergreen – slow grower – very longed lived – extremely tough stately tree - needs large area – moist soils – can be grown in central Alabama
Bald Cypress
*Taxodium distichum*

Beautiful specimen tree – deciduous – bronze fall color – wet (makes knees) dry (no knees)
Found in the Bankhead forest - plant local sources only

Eastern Hemlock
*Tsuga canadensis*
SMALL TREES
Florida or Southern Sugar Maple

*Acer barbatum*

Slow/med growth – more tolerant of high temps than regular sugar maple 35-40ft – moist well drained
American Hornbeam, Ironwood, or Musclewood

*Carpinus caroliniana*

Slow/med growth – smooth muscle like trunk

35-40ft

Good specimen – street tree – wet or dry soils
Eastern Redbud
*Cercis canadensis*

Short lived small tree
Fringetree or Grancy-Greybeard

*Chionanthus virginicus*

Fruit on female trees
Flowering Dogwood

*Cornus florida*
Carolina Silverbell

*Halesia tetraptera*

Med growth rate – understory

Moist soil but occasional drought is OK - 25 - 30ft
Possumhaw
*Ilex decidua*

Deciduous holly – med growth rate – beautiful with foliage gone – cedar wax wings love it in late winter

Full sun/part shade specimen plant or mixed border
Yaupon Holly

*Ilex vomitoria*
Big-leaf Magnolia
*Magnolia macrophylla*
American Hophornbeam, Ironwood

*Ostrya virginiana*

- Slow growth rate – yellow fall color but leaves remain – fruit look like hops
- Interesting bark
- Part sun moist soils best
Sourwood

*Oxydendrum arboreum*

Med/slow growth rate – flowers June-July – Honey

Nice fall color – great landscape tree - understory
Sassafras
*Sassafras albidum*

Med growth rate – very interesting foliage and branching habit – flowers March – poor soils fine – spreads via suckers – fruit for birds
SHRUBS
Bottlebrush Buckeye
*Aesculus parviflora*

Flowers March – spreads – part shade and good moisture – prune heavily after bloom

Deer/Turkey and other wildlife love the seeds
Red Buckeye
*Aesculus pavia*

Moist areas only – 12-15ft – defoliates in drought very early – ruby throated hummingbirds love it – flowers well in shade
American Beautyberry

*Callicarpa americana*

Deciduous shrub to 4’ - known for clusters of bright purple berries late summer and fall. Big green leaves create bold appearance - important bird food and good for flower arrangements. Plant will thrive in any soil conditions and sun or shade.
Sweetshrub  
*Calycanthus floridus*

Deciduous shrub of 6-10 ft.  
Foliage has spicy aroma when crushed, sweet-scented purple-brown flowers in spring.  
Upright form, yellow fall color.  
Grows along fertile woodlands, hillsides and sandy streams from PA and OH to FL and LA.  
Colonizes - great for naturalistic settings - an heirloom garden plant.
Buttonbush
Cephalanthus occidentalis

Deciduous med growth rate – fragrant blooms summer – moist soils - specimen
Summersweet Clethra  
(syn. Sweet Pepperbush)  
*Clethra alnifolia*

Deciduous shrub to 5 ft. with many white flower spikes for 4-6 weeks in summer. Hummers and butterflies adore the spicy fragrance and you will too! Likes wet to moist, acid soils with full sun to partial shade.
Red Titi or Swamp Titi *Cyrilla racemiflora*

Med growth rate – semi evergreen – fall color orange to scarlet

Fragrant blooms in summer on new wood – moist soils – bee plant – part to full sun – 20 ft – great plant
Strawberry Bush
*Euonymus americanus*

Description – next slide
EUONYMUS AMERICANA
"HEARTS-A-BUSTIN"

• Distinctive strawberry pods with coral seed in the fall which the turkeys love. Green stems all year - grows to 5 ft. Prefers shade and moist, well drained soils.
• www.doddnatives.com
Dwarf Fothergilla
Fothergilla gardenii

- Rare multi season native plant
- Blooms in April
- 3-5 feet Dwarf form
- Nice fall color – Scarlet to yellow
- Tolerates drought and occasional wetness
- pH preference acidic to slightly alkaline
- Partial sun, partial shade
Oakleaf Hydrangea

*Hydrangea quercifolia*

Flowers on old wood – prune after bloom
**Hydrangea arborescens** - Smooth or Wild Hydrangea, 'Annabelle'

- Freely suckers; flowers on new growth so prune in early spring
- Sun to partial shade; moist, well-drained soil; not drought tolerant
• Evergreen shrub or small tree to 15’. Tolerant of any conditions.

**EXCELLENT SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY BROADLEAF EVERGREEN.** Round leaves, compact growth. Excellent for hedges, or specimens. Big red berries in winter. Good bird food.

Zone 7 - 10. **FAST GROWING.** No known pest problems.

**ILEX CASSINE ‘TENSAW’**

"‘TENSAW’ DAHOON HOLLY"
Gallberry or Inkberry

*Ilex glabra*

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**Evergreen** — very versatile — sun or shade

- moist only
- 8ft — wildlife - bees

**Compacta cultivar** stays smaller and more dense — Japanese holly substitute
Winterberry
*Ilex verticillata*

Deciduous shrub to 10ft – females produce wonderful fruit loved by birds and other wildlife – many cultivars available – Winter Red or Gold
Florida Anise-tree

*Illicium floridanum*

Evergreen – great shade plant for moist soils – 10ft
Yellow Anise-tree
*Illicium parviflorum*

Evergreen – faster – more sun – 6-10ft
Virginia Sweetspire
*Itea virginica*

Deciduous – med growth – great fall color – moist fertile soils – full sun to light shade
Southern Wax Myrtle
*Morella cerifera* (syn. *Myrica cerifera*)

Male and female on separate plants – nice specimen plant – 15 to 20 ft
Pinckneya or Feverbark

*Pinckneya bracteata*

Needle Palm
*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*

Most cold hardy palm – grow anywhere in Alabama
Deciduous Azaleas

*Rhododendron* spp.
RHODEDENDRON ALABAMENSE
"ALABAMA AZALEA"

Flowers are white with a yellow blotch and are lemon scented. N central AL, MS and parts of GA
Fragnant pink blooms in March. Also know as "honesuckle azalea"
Zone 6 - 10. Deciduous shrub to 10ft found along coastal plain and piedmont in SE.

Photo by www.doddnatives.com
Orange/yellow flowers. Species found on wooded bluffs and slopes, banks of small streams. Occurs in the Panhandle of FL and AL. Deciduous shrub to 15' tall - good drainage essential. Zone 6 - 9.
RHODODENDRON PRUNIFOLIUM
"PLUMLEAF AZALEA"

Slow growing, hard to propagate, and does not bloom young, but what else blooms red in July and August? Calloway Gardens, Ga. is famous for this plant that occurs there in great numbers.
RHODODENDRON HSY X A
"ADMIRAL SEMMES"

- The Confederate Series of native azaleas by Tom Dodd, III are for the hot south.
- The plants are a hybrid of Exbury (large blooms) and Austrinum (heat tolerance).
- This one is a vigorous growing plant with large yellow fragrant blooms in clusters: March.

- Photo: www.doddnatives.com
RHODODENDRON HSY X A  
"COL. MOSBY"

- Large dark pink to salmon fragrant blooms in clusters: April.

Photo by www.doddnatives.com
RHODODENDRON HSY X A
"FREDERICK O. DOUGLAS"

Large fragrant clusters of creamy blooms with yellow, and white buds blushed with pink. www.doddnatives.com
RHODODENDRON HSY X A

"STONEWALL JACKSON"

- Large orange fragrant blooms in April.
- Here pictured with Tom Dodd III, the developer and owner of Dodd Natives Nursery.
American Snowbell
Styrax americanus

Deciduous – shrub too small tree – med/fast growth
White fragrant flowers in April – specimen or understory – moist well drained – light shade
Sparkleberry

*Vaccinium arboreum*
Rabbiteye Blueberry cultivars

*Vaccinium virgatum* (syn. *V. ashei*) cultivars
Deciduous – low growing – blooms April – moist shady areas – black fruit for birds and wildlife - colonizes in understory
Adam’s Needle, Beargrass, Threadleaf Yucca

*Yucca filamentosa*

Credit: Robert Westerfield

Credit: Steve Sanchez

Credit: Robert Westerfield
WOODY VINES
Crossvine
*Bignonia capreolata*

Tough fast growing vine - sun

Semi-evergreen
Climbing Hydrangea
*Decumaria barbara*

Deciduous – fragrant small bloom clusters – May-June – moist shady areas.
Carolina Yellow Jessamine

*Gelsemium sempervirens*

Tough plant – fall/winter
fragrant blooms - sun

Credit: Ed McDowell
Trumpet Honeysuckle
*Lonicera sempervirens*

Only native honeysuckle – hummingbird treat – more next
LONICERA SEMPERVIRENS “Coral Honeysuckle”

- Well behaved cousin of the invasive Japanese honeysuckle.
- Evergreen twining vine with tubular red flowers occurring in wooded areas throughout eastern US.
- Can be used on mailboxes, fences and arbors without fear of it taking over the world.
- Important for hummer fall migration.
- Sun or shade; any soil.
Virginia Creeper

*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

5 leaflets not 3
American Wisteria
*Wisteria frutescens*

Less aggressive native cousin to Chinese wisteria
To learn more about native plants,


[http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/](http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/)

See Southern Environmental Center (Birmingham Southern College)

[http://csunx2.bsc.edu/alnative/ecoscape/index.htm](http://csunx2.bsc.edu/alnative/ecoscape/index.htm)
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For use of pictures
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