

JPPM Plant Walk

Characteristics and Uses



American Elm

Ulmus americana

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Urticales

Family: Ulmaceae

Genus: *Ulmus*

Species: *U. americana*



Characteristics: The American Elm is a deciduous tree, sometimes growing to more than 100 feet tall with a trunk 4 feet or more in diameter. The crown forms a high, spreading canopy. The leaves are alternate, 2.5 to 4 inches long, with sharply serrate edges, and an oblique base. The flowers are small, purple-brown, and have no petals because they are wind pollinated; the flowers emerge in early spring before the leaves. The tree is capable of self-pollination because the flowers each have both male and female parts.



The fruit is a flat samara 0.8 inches long and 0.5 inches wide, with a circular wing surrounding the single 0.15 inch seed. The American Elm reaches reproductive maturity at around 15 years of age. Today, it is uncommon for the tree to reach over 10 years of age because of its susceptibility to Dutch elm disease. However, disease resistant trees have been developed.

Habitat: American Elm grows well in moist soils, especially valleys and flood plains, and mixed hard wood forests.

Range: It can be found from southern Canada to central Florida, into central Texas. However, the species has been planted beyond its range as far north as central Alberta and also survive desert heat in Arizona.

Native American Uses: The American Elm was used by the Native Americans to make infusions and teas for treating colds. In addition, the Elm timber was used for building materials and tools. Groups that utilized this species included the Delaware and the Chippewa Indians.

Colonial Uses: In Colonial England, the leaves of some elm species were used to treat bruising and burns. Decoctions made from the roots, leaves, or bark were said to heal broken bones and shrink tumors.

Modern Uses: American Elm is used widely as a shade and street tree, because of its shape and tolerance of stress factors. The wood is also used for containers, furniture, and paneling.

American Holly

Ilex opaca

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Aquifoliales
Family: Aquifoliaceae
Genus: *Ilex*
Species: *opaca*



Characteristics: The American Holly is a narrow, rounded tree that can grow to between 40 and 70 feet in height. The diameter ranges between 1 to 2 feet. The bark is smooth and grayish in color. The American Holly is most easily recognized by its evergreen, thick, spiny leaves. In the spring it produces small white flowers and in the fall forms bright red berries that last through the winter. Many song and game birds eat the bitter berries, helping to spread the seeds.

Habitat: The American Holly prefers moist but well drained soils, especially flood plains. It also grows well in mixed deciduous forests.

Range: It can be found from Massachusetts to Central Florida, and south central Texas to Missouri.

Native American Uses: Infusions of the American Holly were used by the Native Americans as an eye medicine, a dermatological aid, and berries were chewed as a gastrointestinal aid. In addition, they used the wood for crafts and tools and used the berries for dye. The Cherokee Indians are among the Native American tribes that utilized the American Holly.

Colonial Uses: The leaves were used as a tea substitute, despite the fact that they don't contain caffeine.

Modern Uses: Today, the American Holly is a popular ornamental tree and the evergreen fruiting branches are commonly used as Christmas decorations. The whitish colored wood is used in cabinetry and other carvings and can be easily dyed many shades, even black. The berries should not be consumed as they are poisonous.

American Sycamore

Platanus occidentalis

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Proteales
Family: Platanaceae
Genus: *Platanus*
Species: *P. occidentalis*



Habitat: American Sycamore prefers the wet soils of stream banks, flood plains, and edges of lakes and swamps, and is a dominant species in mixed forests.

Range: American Sycamore can be found from Maine south to Florida, over to central Texas and north to Nebraska.

Native American Uses: The Sycamore was used by Native Americans as an anti-diarrheal, a cathartic, and to induce abortions. In addition, it was used as a cough medicine, a dermatological aid, an emetic, a gastrointestinal aid, and as a urinary aid. The wood was also used for buildings and crafts. Groups that utilized the American Sycamore included the Cherokee and the Delaware Indians.

Colonial Uses: The sap from the Sycamore was drunk like water and contains small concentrations of sugar. The sap can be boiled down to produce syrup.

Modern Uses: Today, the wood is used for furniture parts, millwork, flooring, and specialty products such as butcher blocks, as well as pulpwood, particle board and fiberboard. The Sycamore has also been planted as a shade tree because of its broad spreading crown.

Arrow Arum (Tuckahoe)

Peltandra virginica

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Liliopsida
Order: Alismatale
Family: Araceae
Genus: *Peltandra*
Species: *virginica*



Characteristics: Arrow arum leaves are arrowhead-shaped and are typically 10 to 12 inches long and 5 to 6 inches wide. The leaf underside is whitish with three prominent veins. Its leaves are clustered on long succulent stalks that can be up to three feet long.

Arrow arum flowers are small and light yellow, on a fingerlike spike. The flower spike is surrounded by a bract, or spathe, that is usually yellowish green. The fruits are primarily dispersed by water, although animals also play a role.

Habitat: It is a plant of still or slow moving waters: ponds, swamps, marshes, and the banks of streams. It grows in areas of extreme light or shade.

Range: Arrow Arum is found throughout the United States except for in the Rocky Mountain states.

Native American Uses: The Arrow Arum rootstalk is rich in starches and was dried and then used to make breads and soups. The root is also rich in starch and likewise required thorough cooking in order to destroy the oxalic acid. Groups that utilized Arrow Arum included the Nanticoke, Powhatans, and the Seminoles.

Colonial Uses: The cooked roots were eaten as a source of starch; however this was not a widespread process due to the difficulty of preparation.

Modern Uses: Tuckahoe is toxic containing calcium oxalate crystals that discourage herbivory. The microscopic crystals cause severe swelling and a horrible burning sensation when they puncture the membranes of the mouth and throat. Swallowing can be fatal. Calcium oxalate can be destroyed by very long cooking or heating and drying.

Black Walnut

Juglans nigra L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Fagales
Family: Juglandaceae
Genus: *Juglans*
Species: *J. nigra*



Range: The Black Walnut is native to the eastern half of the United States, from New York to Florida and central Texas to southeastern South Dakota.

Native American Uses: Common Native American uses of the Black Walnut include utilizing infusions to treat goiter, smallpox, ringworm, and toothaches. Tea made from the bark was used to treat gastrointestinal ailments; however a strong decoction of the bark was taken as a cathartic and an emetic. The dried nuts were valued as a food item. Groups that utilized this plant include the Cherokee and the Delaware Indians.

Colonial Uses: The colonists used the strong hardwood of the Black Walnut for gunstocks, furniture, flooring, paddles, coffins, and a variety of other woodworking products. They also made a blackish dye from the husks of the fruit. In addition, colonists consumed dried nuts from the tree, which were prized for their flavor. The Black Walnut was introduced into Europe in 1637. It was cultivated there as a forest tree for its high quality wood.

Modern Uses: Black Walnut continues to be used for flooring, cabinetry, and other furniture items.

Characteristics: The Black Walnut is a deciduous tree reaching heights of 100 to 130 feet tall. The bark is grey-black and deeply furrowed. The leaves are alternate and odd-pinnately compound with 15–23 leaflets. The flowers are small and greenish, appearing in the early spring with male and female flowers on separate stalks. In the autumn they mature into a fruit with a brownish-green, semi-fleshy husk and a brown corrugated nut. The whole fruit, including the husk, falls in October; the seed is relatively small and very hard.

Habitat: The Black Walnut grows well in moist well-drained soils, especially along streams and scattered in mixed forests. It is a light-demanding species.



Broadleaf Cattail

Typha latifolia L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Liliopsida
Order: Poales
Family: Typhaceae
Genus: *Typha*
Species: *latifolia*



Characteristics: The broadleaf cattail is typically 1 to 7 meters tall, with spongy, strap-like leaves and starchy, creeping stems. The leaves are alternate and mostly basal to a simple, jointless stem that bears the flowers at the top. The rhizomes spread horizontally beneath the surface of muddy ground to start new upright growth. The male flower spike develops at the top of the vertical stem, above the female flower spike. The male flowers are reduced to a pair of stamens and hairs and wither once the pollen is shed, leaving a short, and bare stem portion above the female inflorescence. The dense cluster of female flowers forms a cylindrical spike 10 to as much as 40 centimeters long and 1 to 4 centimeters wide. Broad leaf cattails are monoecious, wind-pollinated, and bear unisexual flowers developing in dense, complex spikes. The seeds are attached to a thin hair or stalk, which aids in wind dispersal.

Habitat: It grows in marshy areas.

Range: Broadleaf cattails grow in temperate, subtropical, and tropical areas throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

Native American Uses: The broadleaf cattail was used by the Native Americans for many purposes. Medicinally, parts of the cattail were used as dermatological, gastrointestinal, kidney, pulmonary, and venereal aids. It was also used as a disinfectant, for burn dressings, as an emetic, and as an antidiarrheal. The rhizomes are a nutritious and energy-rich food source, generally harvested from late fall to early spring. In late spring, the bases of the leaves, while they are young and tender, can be eaten raw or cooked. The downy material was used by Native Americans as tinder for starting fires. They also used cattail down to line moccasins and papoose boards. The reeds of the cattails were woven together and used as coverings for their shelters. Groups that utilized this species include the Iroquois and the Delaware Indians.

Colonial Uses: The cattail down mixed with pig grease was applied to burns. The down was also collected to make mattresses.

Common Greenbrier

Smilax rotundifolia L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Liliopsida
Order: Liliales
Family: Smilacaceae
Genus: *Smilax*
Species: *S. rotundifolia*



Characteristics: Common Greenbrier is a woody vine that climbs other plants using green tendrils growing out of its petioles. The leaves are glossy green, alternate, and circular to heart-shaped. They are generally 5-13 centimeters long. The round stems have sharp prickles growing on them. The flowers are greenish, and the fruit are bluish black berries. Common greenbrier produces fruit every year. Seeds are dispersed by animals and water. The flowers are seen from April to August, and the fruit becomes ripe in September.

Habitat: Common greenbrier grows in roadsides, landscapes, clearings and woods. When it is growing around a clearing, it often forms dense and impassable thickets

Range: It grows throughout the Eastern United States, as far north as Illinois, south to Florida and as far west as Texas.

Native American Uses: Greenbrier was used to treat local pains, rheumatism, and burns and boils. In addition it was used to treat gastrointestinal ailments as well as an orthopedic aid. The roots and young shoots of greenbrier were also used as food. The young leaves and tendrils were prepared like spinach or added directly to salads. The roots contain a natural gelling agent that was extracted and used as a thickening agent. The Cherokee Indians are among the Native American tribes that utilize this plant.

Common Milkweed

Asclepias syriaca L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Gentianales
Family: Apocynaceae
Genus: *Asclepias*
Species: *syriaca*



Characteristics: The common milkweed is a tall downy plant, ranging 2 to 6 feet in height. It has purple to pink flower clusters, which are approximately 2 inches wide and appear in the spring. The leaves are opposite and 4 to 10 inches in length; they are light green with grayish down beneath and produce a milky sap when damaged. The seed pods are rough in texture, opening along the side, and producing overlapping seeds with tufts of silky hairs.

Habitat: Milkweed grows well in old fields, waste places, and roadsides.

Range: It can be found from Canada to Georgia, west to Texas, and up through North Dakota.

Native American Uses: Milkweed was used as a painkiller, a pulmonary aid, and to treat diarrhea. In addition, fibers from the stems were utilized to make belts and the roots were ingested to treat rheumatism and pleurisy. Milkweed roots were also used to make a drink that was given to women after childbirth. Finally, a poultice from crushed leaves that was used to treat snakebites. The Cherokee, Delaware, and Rappahannock Indians were among the Native American tribes to utilize the milkweed.

Modern Uses: Milkweed plants contain chemicals, cardiac glycosides, which make the plant toxic herbivores. However, it is consumed by Monarch Butterfly larvae and is sequestered within the organism, causing the butterflies to be toxic to predators as well. These cardiac glycosides have been used in treating some forms of heart disease.

Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale Web.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Asterales
Family: Asteraceae
Genus: *Taraxacum*
Species: *T. officinale*



Characteristics: The Dandelion has leaves that are 5 to 25 inches long and are simple and basal. The leaves can be either entire or lobed. The leaves form a rosette above the central taproot. A bright yellow flower head (which is open in the daytime but closes at night) is borne singly on a hollow stem which rises 1.5 to 11 inches above the leaves and exudes a milky sap when broken. One rosette may produce several flowering stems at a time. The flower head is 1 to 2 inches in diameter and consists entirely of ray florets. The inner bracts are erect until the seeds mature, then flex down to allow the seeds to disperse. As the leaves grow outward they kill the surrounding vegetation by cutting off the sunlight. The dandelion flower matures into a globe of fine filaments that are distributed by wind.

Habitat: Dandelions grow in open, sunny locations, such as lawns, fields, and roadsides.

Range: Native to temperate areas of North America, they have become established throughout the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand as weeds.

Native American Uses: The dandelion was used as a dermatological aid, as well as to treat gastrointestinal and throat ailments. In addition, infusions were used for food, as a blood medicine, an analgesic, and a sedative. Finally, it was used as a laxative. The Cherokee, Delaware, Iroquois, and Rappahannock Indians are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: In colonial England, the citizens used decoctions to treat ulcers, jaundice, and ailments of the liver, gall bladder, and spleen.

Modern Uses: Today, dandelions are grown commercially at a small scale as a leaf vegetable. Typically, the young leaves and unopened buds are eaten raw in salads, while older leaves are cooked. The leaves are high in vitamin A, vitamin C, and iron, carrying more iron and calcium than spinach. Ground roasted dandelion root can be used as a coffee substitute, which consumed before a meal is believed to stimulate digestive function. Dandelion root is a registered drug in Canada, sold as a diuretic. A leaf decoction can be consumed for the treatment of anemia, jaundice, and also for nervousness. The milky latex has been used as a mosquito repellent; the milk is also applied to warts, helping get rid of them without damaging the surrounding skin. This plant also is useful in farming, because its deep, strong roots break up hardpan. Dandelion contains luteolin, which has demonstrated antioxidant properties.

Devil's Walking Stick

Aralia spinosa L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Apiales
Family: Araliaceae
Genus: *Aralia*
Species: *A. spinosa*



Characteristics: *Aralia spinosa*, known as Devil's Walking Stick, is a spiny shrub or sometimes a small tree. The twigs are very thick, light brown colored, and covered with many straight sharp spines, especially at the nodes. The bipinnately compound leaves are 16 to 30 inches long and clustered at the ends of the twigs. The leaflets are numerous and are mostly paired; they are ovate to broadly elliptical in shape, and 2 to 3.5 inches long, with finely serrate edges. The leaflets are dark green above and lighter below, often with prickles on the mid-vein on the underside. The small white flowers have 5 petals in a large cluster 8 to 16 inches long. Devil's Walking Stick flowers in the summer and the fruits, numerous black drupes about 0.25 inches in diameter, mature in late fall. It propagates by sprouting from the roots to form cloned thickets.

Habitat: This plant typically grows in the forest understory or along the edges of forests.

Range: It can be found from Pennsylvania westward to Missouri and southward to Texas.

Native American Uses: Infusions and decoctions were made from Devil's Walking Stick as a dermatological aid, an emetic, a carminative, and to treat toothaches and rheumatism. Decoctions made from the roots were used as a salve for boils and sores, as well as to reduce fevers. The young leaves were eaten if gathered before the prickles harden; they were chopped finely and cooked as a potherb. The Cherokee and Rappahannock Indians are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: Devil's Walking Stick was introduced into cultivation in 1688 and the bark of the root and the berries were used in medicines.

Modern Uses: Devil's Walking Stick is still grown for its decorative foliage.

Eastern Redcedar

(Red Juniper)

Juniperus virginiana L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae

Division: Pinophyta

Class: Pinopsida

Order: Pinales

Family: Cupressaceae

Genus: *Juniperus*

Species: *J. virginiana* L.



Characteristics: Eastern Redcedar is an evergreen, aromatic tree with a trunk that is often angled and slightly wider at the base, but with a narrow, compact crown that sometimes becomes broad and irregular. It grows to heights ranging from 40 to 60 feet with a trunk diameter of 1 to 2 feet. However, in poor soil it may never become more than a shrub. The leaves are evergreen and opposite in 4 rows forming slender quadrangle twigs. The bark is reddish brown, thin, fibrous, and shreds easily. The cones are small, approximately 1/4 to 3/8 of an inch in diameter and are berry-like in appearance. The pollen cones are on separate trees from the berries.

Habitat: Eastern Redcedar is found in microenvironments that range from dry uplands to flood plains and swamps. It can also inhabit abandoned fields and fence rows, and can be found scattered in pure stands.

Range: It is widespread among the eastern half United States, from Maine to Florida and Texas to North Dakota.

Native American Uses: Decoctions made from Eastern Redcedar were used to treat worms, infusions to treat colds and diarrhea, and decoctions from twigs to treat rheumatism. Infusions made from the bark and the berries were used to treat summer cholera and asthma. Native American tribes that commonly utilized the Eastern Redcedar were the Cherokee, Iroquois, and the Rappahannock Indians.

Colonial Uses: The colonists used the wood for making fence posts and cedar chests, cabinets and carvings. Cedar oil, used in medicines and perfumes, was obtained from the leaves and the wood.

Modern Uses: Although it is now grown predominately for Christmas trees, shelterbelts, and as an ornamental, it is not usually planted near apple orchards because Eastern Red Cedar is an alternative host for cedar-apple rust, a fungal disease, which could decimate an orchard.

Flowering Dogwood

Cornus florida L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Cornales
Family: Cornaceae
Genus: *Cornus*
Species: *florida* L.



Characteristics: The Flowering Dogwood is a relatively small tree, reaching heights of 30 feet and trunk diameters of 8 inches. The rough bark is a reddish-brown color. The leaves are opposite and elliptical, approximately 2.5 to 5 inches long and 1.5 to 2.5 inches wide, with slightly wavy edges. The flowers are $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter and are greenish yellow. These are surrounded by four white petal-like bracts, approximately 1.5 inches long. The bright red, berry-like fruit form in clusters and are about $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch in diameter.

Range: Flowering dogwood is widely dispersed throughout the eastern United States.

Habitat: It tolerates both moist and dry soils of valleys and uplands; it can also be found in fields and along road sides. This deciduous tree is well adapted for the forest understory. It can tolerate conditions that range from full shade to almost full sun.

Native American Uses: The bark and the roots were used as a remedy for malaria and a red dye was extracted from the roots. A tonic was made from the roots and root infusions were consumed as an antidiarrheal, a blood purifier, and a tonic. Also, the flowering dogwood was used as a decoration and for making tools. Shredded bark from the twigs was used to whiten the teeth. The Creoles of Virginia, the Cherokee, Delaware, and Rappahannock Indians are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: Colonial Americans drank a tea brewed from the bark to reduce fevers. In addition, dogwood braches were used to dry fish by the farmers because of the branching pattern of its limbs.

Modern Uses: The flowering dogwood is widely planted for its showy spring flowers and brilliant red fall foliage. In addition, the extremely hard wood is dense, compact and fine-grained, and is used for the construction of commercial loom shuttles and spindles. Old Southern folklore even says that Jesus was crucified on a cross that was made from dogwood, which at the time grew as large as oak trees, but that because of Jesus' suffering the berries turned bright red and the tree ceased to grow tall and straight.

Jewelweed

Impatiens capensis Meerb.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Geraniales
Family: Balsaminaceae
Genus: *Impatiens*
Species: *I. capensis* Meerb.



Characteristics: Jewelweed is an annual with leaves that are somewhat triangular in shape with toothed margins. The flowers are orange colored, tubular shaped, and hooked at one end. The stems are somewhat translucent, but are succulent and have swollen or darkened nodes. The flowers may be found as early as June, but typically bloom in October. The seed pods are pendant shaped and when ripe have projectile seeds that explode out of the pods when they are lightly touched.

Habitat: Jewelweed is common in rich bottomland soils, ditches, and along the edges of streams and marshes.

Range: It can be found throughout most of North America wherever the soil is moist enough to support it.

Native American Uses: Juice from jewelweed stems and leaves were used to alleviate poison ivy and stinging nettle rashes, as well as other skin irritations. A decoction of the stems was also taken to ease childbirth and an infusion of the leaves was used as a treatment for measles. The Cherokee and Chippewa Indians are Native American tribes that were known to utilize this species.

Modern Uses: The young sprouts can be eaten, and the juices of old plants can be applied to skin irritations, such as those caused by poison ivy and stinging nettle.

Narrow-leaved Cattail

Typha angustifolia

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Liliopsida
Order: Poales
Family: Typhaceae
Genus: *Typha*
Species: *T. angustifolia*





Characteristics: Narrow-leaved Cattail typically grows up 1 to 7 meters tall, with spongy, strap-like leaves and starchy, creeping stems. The jointless stem bears the flowers. The rhizomes spread horizontally beneath the surface of the ground to start new upright growth. The male flowers are reduced to a pair of stamens and hairs and wither once the pollen is shed, leaving a short and bare stem portion above the female inflorescence. The dense cluster of female flowers forms a cylindrical spike some 10 to as much as 40 centimeters long and 1 to 4 centimeters wide. The seeds are very small, only about 0.2 millimeters long. Cattails are monoecious, wind-pollinated, and bear unisex flowers developing in dense, complex spikes. The seeds are attached to a thin hair or stalk, which enhances wind dispersal.

Habitat: Narrow-leaved Cattails grow in marshy areas.

Range: It can grow in temperate, subtropical and tropical areas throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

Native American Uses: Native American tribes used cattail down to line moccasins and papoose boards. The reeds of the Cattails were also cut down and woven together as mats to form covering for Native American shelters and making baskets, mats, rugs and bedding. The cattail was used as a urinary aid and to enhance kidney function. The rhizomes and the roots of the Narrow-leaved Cattail are a nutritious and energy-rich food source, generally harvested from late fall to early spring. In late spring, the bases of the leaves, while they are young and tender, can be eaten raw or cooked. As the flower spike is developing in early summer, it can be broken off and eaten, and in mid-Summer, once the flowers are mature, the pollen can be collected and used as a flour supplement or thickener. Iroquois and the Delaware Indians are among the Native American tribes that utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: The cattail down mixed with pigs grease was applied to burns. The down was also collected to make mattresses.

Pawpaw

Asimina triloba

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliales
Order: Magnoliopsida
Family: Annonaceae
Genus *Asimina*
Species: *A. triloba*



Characteristics: The Pawpaw is a deciduous, often narrowly conical tree growing from about 12 feet to around 20 feet. The dark green, obovate-oblong, drooping leaves grow up to 12 inches long, giving the pawpaw a tropical appearance. The maroon flowers are up to 2 inches across and hang upside-down. They bloom from late March to early May. Each flower contains several ovaries, which explains why a single flower can produce multiple fruits.

Habitat: Pawpaw is an understory tree that likes wet, well drained, fertile soil. It can grow in upland environments if the soil is rich enough. The young plants need a lot of shade to do well.

Range: Pawpaw can be found from Ontario and Michigan south to Florida and Texas.

Native American Uses: The Pawpaw fruit was consumed raw or mashed, cooked or dried. In addition the inner bark was utilized to make string and ropes. Both the Cherokee and Rappahannock Indians ate the fruit from the Pawpaw tree.

Modern Uses: While the wild fruit was once harvested, the supply has greatly decreased as a result of the depletion of forests. Today, the fruit is mainly consumed by wildlife, but attempts have been made to cultivate the Pawpaw as a commercial fruit tree.



Persimmon

Diospyros virginiana L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Ebenales
Family: Ebenaceae
Genus: *Diospyros*
Species: *D. virginiana*



Characteristics: The Persimmon tree has a dense rounded, cylindrical crown, but sometimes grows as a shrub. The leaves are ovate to elliptical shaped, and shiny, dark green above, but whitish and hairless on the bottom. The bark is deeply furrowed, with square shaped scaly plates. The flowers form in the spring, are small and white with four lobes. The trees are dioecious- the male and female flowers are on separate trees. Sweet orange fruit are produced in the fall, which are favored by wildlife that spread the seeds.

Habitat: Persimmons grow well in moist alluvial soils of valleys and dry upland, roadsides, old fields, clearings, and mixed forests.

Range: It can be found from southern Connecticut to southern Florida, to central Texas to southeast Iowa.

Native American Uses: A syrup was taken for diarrhea and an astringent from the plant was used for sore throat and mouth. The bark was chewed for heartburn and a compound was used in steam bath for indigestion or biliousness. An infusion of the inner bark was used to treat thrash and sore throats. The fruit was used in puddings, beverages, corn meal, baked, dried, or eaten raw. However, the immature fruits contain tannin and are strongly astringent. Both the Cherokee and the Rappahannock Indians utilized this tree species.

Modern Uses: The dense heartwood from the tree was once used to make golf clubs, shuttles for weaving, and furniture veneer.



Phragmites

Phragmites australis (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Liliopsida
Order: Poales
Family: Poaceae
Genus: *Phragmites*
Species: *australis*



Characteristics: Phragmites, sometimes known as Giant Reed, is a tall thick stemmed grass. The leaves are flat, sharply pointed and green to bluish in color. Leaves can be up to 20 inches long and 2 inches wide; they are rough edged, sheathing the stem at the base. It bears spikelets with many silky hairs in large terminal clusters that are initially reddish colored but change to silver. Phragmites is invasive and has replaced extensive regions of tidal marshes. It rarely produces seeds, rather spreads horizontally through rhizomes over the surface of the ground. It can form dense stands that exclude all other species.

Habitat: It can grow in freshwater and brackish marshes, as well as ditches and waste places.

Range: Phragmites can be found throughout North America, except the far north.

Native American Uses: Phragmites was used for arrows, blow guns, and flutes. The stems of this species were used as thatching material for roofs. The tiny reddish seeds were ground into flour or made into gruel. The rootstocks could be crushed and washed to obtain flour. In addition, the Iroquois Indians used phragmites as a ceremonial medicine. It

Uses: Phragmites is used as pollution filter and the rhizomes provide food for marsh inhabitants. It can be planted to prevent erosion, however given its invasive nature, this is not often done.

Poison Ivy

Toxicodendron radicans (L.) Kuntze

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Phylum: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Sapindales
Family: Anacardiaceae
Genus: *Toxicodendron*
Species: *radicans*



Characteristics: Poison ivy leaves consist of three almond-shaped leaflets. The color ranges from light green to dark green, turning bright red in fall. The leaflets are 3-12 cm long, rarely up to 30 cm and the leaf surface is smooth. The berries are green, but turn a grayish-white color. The plants can grow as a shrub up to about 4 ft tall, as a groundcover 4-10 in high, or as a climbing vine on various supports. Older vines on substantial supports send out lateral branches that may at first be mistaken for tree limbs. Birds and mammals disperse the fruits. Unconsumed fruits are retained on the plant through winter and are deposited beneath the parent plant in spring. Vegetative expansion by rhizome is a major mode of reproduction in established plants.

Habitat: It is usually found in wooded areas, especially along edge areas. It also grows in exposed rocky areas and in open fields.

Range: Poison ivy grows vigorously throughout much of North America, including all states except Alaska.

Native American Uses: The Cherokee Indians used a poison ivy decoction as an emetic. In addition, it was used in tonics and as a dermatological aid for boils.

Modern Uses: Don't!

The reaction caused by poison ivy, urushiol-induced contact dermatitis, is an allergic reaction. For those who are affected by urushiol, it causes a very irritating rash. The first symptom of contact is a severe itching of the skin that develops into reddish colored inflammation or non-colored bumps, and then blistering of the skin occurs. If poison ivy is burned and the smoke then inhaled, this rash will appear on the lining of the lungs, causing extreme pain and possibly fatal respiratory difficulty. If poison ivy is eaten, the digestive tract and airways will be affected, in some cases causing death. According to the FDA, in case of known contact, exposed skin needs to be cleaned within 10 minutes of contact with rubbing alcohol, then washed with water only then take a shower with soap and warm water. Folk remedies for poison ivy include crushing the stems of jewelweed.

Red Maple

Acer rubrum L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Sapindales
Family: Sapindaceae
Genus: *Acer*
Species: *rubrum*



Characteristics: The Red Maple tree has a rounded and compact crown. It reaches heights of 60 to 90 feet with an average trunk diameter of 2.5 feet. The bark is gray, thin and smooth, developing into long scaly ridges as the tree matures. The leaves are 2.5 to 4 inches in length and broadly ovate, with 3 shallow short-pointed lobes. The edges are wavy, serrate and have a long red or green leaf stalk. The leaves are dull green above and whitish and hairy beneath. The fruit are $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch long. They have long wing and contain one seed. The long wing aids in wind-disseminated seed dispersal.

Habitat: Red maple grows well in wet or moist soils, such as stream banks, valleys, and swamps. However it can also inhabit uplands and sometimes dry ridges. Red maple is often found in mixed hardwood forests.

Range: It can be found from southeast Manitoba to east Newfoundland, and south Florida to east Texas.

Native American Uses: An infusion of the bark was taken for cramps, hives, and dysentery. The inner bark was boiled and used with water as wash for sore eyes. In addition, a hot infusion of bark was given for measles. Finally, red maple was used to make baskets, building materials, furniture, and carvings. The Cherokee Indians are among the Native American tribes to utilize this species.

Colonial Uses: Colonists made ink and cinnamon-brown or black dye from the bark extract.

Modern Uses: Today, Red Maple is predominantly planted because it is an attractive shade tree, with bright red foliage in the fall, but its sap can also be made into a sugary syrup.

Red Oak

Quercus rubra L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Rosopsida
Order: Fagales
Family: Fagaceae
Genus: *Quercus*
Species: *Q. rubra*



Characteristics: The Red Oak is a large tree with a rounded crown of stout, spreading branches. It ranges from 60 to 90 feet in height and the diameter of the trunk ranges from 1 to 2.5 feet. The bark is dark gray or blackish, rough, and furrowed in scaly ridges, with a reddish inner bark. The egg-shaped acorns of this species range from 5/8 to 1 1/8 inches in length. Less than a third of the acorn is enclosed by a broad cup of reddish-brown, blunt, tightly overlapping scales. The acorns mature in their second year.

Habitat: Red Oak grows in a wide variety of soils, including moist, loamy, sandy, rocky, and clay soils. It can be found in mixed hardwood forests, but often forms pure stands.

Range: It has a broad range, from western Ontario and Cape Breton Island to Georgia, and southeast Oklahoma to Minnesota.

Native American Uses: The Red Oak bark was used for dysentery and chewed to treat mouth sores; an infusion was taken to treat asthma. The bark was also used as an antiseptic and an emetic. Red Oak was also used to make baskets, cooking tools, and building materials. It was commonly used to suppress severe coughs, but bark infusions also served as a dietary aid. This species was utilized by the Cherokee, Delaware, and Rappahannock Indians.

Colonial Uses: The colonists used the Red Oak to make woven chair bottoms, cooking tools, including using the leaves used to wrap dough for bread making. The wood was also used for firewood.

Modern Uses: This species is the most important lumber tree of the Red Oak group. Most are used for flooring, furniture, millwork, railroad cross-ties, mine timbers, fence posts, pilings, and pulpwood. The Red Oak is one of the most rapidly growing oaks and its dense foliage and good form make it a popular shade tree. In addition, it transplants easily, is hardy in city conditions, and endures cold temperatures well.

Swamp Rose Mallow

Hibiscus moscheutos Welw. ex Hiern.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Malvales
Family: Malvaceae
Genus: *Hibiscus*
Species: *moscheutos*



Characteristics: The Swamp Rose Mallow is a multi-stemmed, shrub-like, herbaceous perennial. It can grow up to 7 feet tall. The leaves are usually 2 to 3 inches wide by 6 to 8 inches long, velvety to the touch on the underside and smooth on top. The flowers are about 6 inches in diameter, with white or pink petals and crimson centers. The swamp-rose mallow dies back in winter and re-sprouts in the spring. It reproduces via seeds or root division.

Habitat: The swamp rose mallow inhabits swamps, marshes and ditches; it grows best in full sun.

Range: It can be found throughout the southeastern United States from Texas to the Atlantic states with its territory extending northward to southern Ontario.

Native American Uses: It is unknown if local Native American Tribes utilized this species; however the Shinnecock Indians used it as a urinary aid and to treat inflamed bladders.

Modern Uses: This type of hibiscus is not edible, but it is commonly used as decoration or as natural borders. They are also effective along streams or ponds.

Sweet Gum

Liquidambar styraciflua L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Saxifragales
Family: Altingiaceae
Genus: *Liquidambar*
Species: *L. styraciflua*



Characteristics: Sweet Gum is a large, aromatic tree with a straight trunk and gray, deeply furrowed, scaly bark. The tree can grow to heights ranging from 60 to 100 feet. The leaves are 3 to 6 inches long and wide. They are star shaped and have 5, or sometimes 7, deep, finely toothed lobes. In the spring, greenish ball-like clusters of flowers form with the male flowers in clusters along the stalk and the female flowers in drooping clusters on the same tree. The sweet gum is probably most easily recognized by its fruit. Approximately 1 inch in diameter, the long-stalked drooping brown ball is actually composed of many individual fruits, ending in 2 long curved prickly points. The seeds mature in the fall and persist through the winter.

Habitat: Sweet gum grows well in the moist soils of valleys and lower slopes and mixed woodlands. It is a pioneer species invading clearings and old fields.

Range: It can be found from extreme southwest Connecticut to central Florida, and east Texas to southern Illinois. There are also some varieties found in eastern Mexico.

Native American Uses: The Cherokee Indians used the inner bark for diarrhea, flux, and dysentery. They also used it as a slave for wounds, sores, and ulcers. An infusion of the bark was given to calm the nerves. The Rappahannock Indians used the sweet gum similarly. However, they also used it to make a drink from the sap and the bark to treat distemper in dogs.

Colonial Uses: The colonists obtained a “gum” by peeling back the bark and scraping off the resin-like solid. This gum was used medicinally, as well as in chewing gum.

Modern Uses: Today sweet gum is one of the leading furniture woods; it is used in the production of cabinets, veneer, plywood, barrels and boxes.

Trumpet Vine

Campsis radicans (L.)

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Scrophulariales
Family: Bignoniaceae
Genus: *Campsis*
Species: *radicans*



Habitat: Trumpet Vine grows well in low woods, fallow fields, fence rows, and thickets.

Range: Found throughout the United States, with the exception of the extreme North East and the Rocky Mountain Region.

Modern Uses: This attractive vine is often cultivated, but can be undesirably aggressive in the South.



Characteristics: The Trumpet Vine is a woody vine with trumpet-shaped red-orange to yellowish flowers. The vine is generally 20 feet in length but can be larger. The flowers are approximately 2.5 inches in length and form July through September. The leaves are pinnately compound, composed of 7 to 9 leaflets. The fruit is borne in a capsule ranging from 5 to 7 inches in length. The vine climbs or spreads over the ground by means of aerial rootlets on the stems which latches on to whatever is located nearby.



Tulip Poplar

Liriodendron tulipifera L

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Phylum: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Magnoliales
Family: Magnoliaceae
Genus: *Liriodendron*
Species: *tulipifera*



Characteristics: Tulip poplar is a member of the magnolia family. The smooth leaves are tulip-shaped, alternate, and simple. Twigs are moderately stout, olive-brown, to reddish brown, very smooth and usually lustrous; the large terminal bud has two large duck-bill shaped scales. The bark on younger trunks and branches is quite smooth, light ashy-gray with very shallow, longitudinal, whitish furrows. With age the bark becomes very thick; having deep interlacing furrows and rather narrow rounded ridges. This tree is rapid growing, attaining heights of 80 to 120 feet and a trunk diameter of 2 to 5 feet. Tulip poplar produces tulip-shaped, light greenish-yellow flowers from April to June. The fruit form in cone shaped clusters.

Habitat: Tulip poplar does best on moderately moist, deep, well drained, loose textured soils; it rarely grows well in very dry or very wet situations with a pH of 4.5 to 7.5.

Range: It is found throughout the eastern and southeastern regions of the United States.

Uses: The wood of tulip poplar is moderately light, soft, brittle, moderately weak, and is very easily worked. It is used for furniture stock, veneer and pulpwood. Tulip poplar makes a desirable street, shade, or ornamental tree, but the large size it attains makes it unsuited for many sites. This species has some wildlife value. The fruits provide food for squirrels in the late fall and winter months, and the white-tailed deer often browse on the twigs.

Native American Uses: Infusions of the bark were used to treat pinworms, diarrhea, dysentery, and infant cholera. In addition, the bark was used to make cough syrup and a fever reducer, and a decoction was blown onto wounds and boils. They also used the tree to make honey and cordage. A poultice was made from bruised leaves and was bound to the head for neuralgic pain and the raw, green bark was chewed as a stimulant. The Cherokee and the Rappahannock are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Virginia Creeper

Parthenocissus quinquefolia (L.) Planch.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Phylum: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Vitales
Family: Vitaceae
Genus: *Parthenocissus*
Species: *quinquefolia*



Characteristics: Virginia creeper is a perennial plant and a prolific climber, reaching heights of 60 to 100 feet. It climbs smooth surfaces using small forked tendrils tipped with small strongly adhesive pads. The leaves are palmately compound, comprised of five leaflets joined from a central point on the leafstalk, and range from 1 to 8 inches across. The flowers are small and greenish, produced in clusters in the late spring. In the summer or early fall, the fruit form and mature into small hard purplish-black berries. The berries are then eaten and distributed by a wide variety of songbirds.

Habitat: Virginia Creeper will grow in deciduous woodlands, forest borders, thickets, gravelly seeps, limestone glades, rocky bluffs, fence rows, and walls of buildings. It can adapt to disturbed habitats in both rural and urban areas.

Range: It can be found throughout the eastern and central regions of North America, as far west as Utah and Texas.

Native American Uses: An infusion made from Virginia Creeper was used to treat jaundice. Also, a compound decoction of twigs was used as a wash to counteract poison sumac. The plant was also used as an herbal remedy for diarrhea, swelling, lockjaw, as well as a urinary aid. The Cherokee and Iroquois are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Modern Uses: Virginia creeper is grown as an ornamental plant and can be used as a shading vine for buildings with masonry walls. The berries of this plant contain oxalic acid, which is poisonous to humans and other mammals, and may be fatal if eaten.

Wild Garlic

Allium vineale L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Phylum: Magnoliophyta
Class: Liliopsida
Order: Asparagales
Family: Lilaceae
Genus: *Allium*
Species: *vineale*



Characteristics: Wild garlic is a perennial herb growing approximately 8 to 12 inches in height. Bright green tubular leaves arise from the main underground bulb in early spring. Later in the season, a few main stalks become large and produce flowers. Greenish-white to lavender, tubular flowers appear from May to July and are above aerial bulblets. Aerial bulblets at the top of the stem are oval, smooth with shiny covering and will often sprout while still on the plant. The seeds are black, flat on one side and about 1/8 inch long. The root system consists of short, fibrous roots developing from the bottom of underground bulbs. The plants have a strong garlic or onion odor when crushed. It reproduces from seed, aerial bulblets, and bulbs. The flowers are hermaphrodite and are pollinated by insects.

Habitat: Wild garlic grows in a variety of habitats, from woodlands to open fields, preferring frequently disturbed areas.

Range: Wild garlic is native to Europe, north Africa and western Asia, however it can now be found in the eastern half of the United States and along the west coast.

Native American Uses: Wild garlic was used as a carminative, a mild cathartic, and a diuretic. It was also used to treat asthma, ear aches, and scurvy. In addition, a tincture was used to prevent worms and colic in children and used as a croup remedy. Also, the raw bulbs were chewed for high blood pressure and shortness of breath. The Cherokee and the Rappahannock Indians are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: The colonists used garlic to heal a wide variety of ailments including rashes and swelling, dog bites, worms, ear aches.

Modern Uses: It causes a garlic-like flavor and odor on dairy and beef products when grazed by livestock. It is sometimes considered a weed as grain products may become tainted with a garlic odor or flavor in the presence of aerial bulblets at the time of harvest.

Wild White Clover

Trifolium repens L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Fabales
Family: Fabaceae
Genus: *Trifolium*
Species: *repens*



Characteristics: The white clover plant has compound leaves divided into three leaflets which are all joined at a central point and originate at the nodes along the stems. The flowers are an aggregate of 20 to 40 individual flowers. They are white in color, although some have a slight pink tint. White clover flowers from May through September. It is a perennial and reproduces primarily by seed and occasionally creeping stems.

Habitat: White clover is adapted to many soils but tends to grow best in soils that are moist and low in nitrogen. It can be found along roadsides, in fields, and in lawns.

Range: White clover is found throughout the United States.

Native American Uses: An infusion was used to treat fevers and an infusion of the flowers as an eyewash. The Cherokee Indians are among the Native American tribes known to have utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: It was introduced by early colonists as a pasture plant.

Modern Uses: It is best suited for grazing and can be used for hay, soil improvement, and reclaiming disturbed lands. It is a choice food for wildlife such as deer, rabbit, etc.

Willow Oak

Quercus phellos L.

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Phylum: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Fagales
Family: Fagaceae
Genus: *Quercus*
Species: *phellos*



Characteristics: The Willow Oak has a conical or rounded crown with branches ending in very slender, pin-like, twigs with willow-like leaves. It can reach heights of 50 to 80 feet with trunk diameters ranging from 1 to 2 feet. The narrow, oblong leaves have bristles on the end; the edges are straight or only slightly wavy. The bark of younger trees is dark gray and smooth, becoming blackish, irregular, and rough as the tree ages. Brown acorns are produced in the fall every second year.

Habitat: Willow Oaks grow best in moist sand, silt, clay or gravel soil in lowlands, mainly floodplains of streams. They can sometimes be found in pure stands, but often grow in mixed hardwood forests.

Range: The Willow Oak is found throughout the eastern and southern United States from New Jersey to Florida and even into Texas and Illinois.

Native American Uses: Some tribes used decoction of wood or bark as a bath for aches and pains. In addition the acorns were utilized as food and wood was used for crafts.

Colonial Uses: Acorns sometimes served as a substitute for flour and, when roasted with chicory, a coffee substitute.

Modern Uses: A popular street and shade tree, the Willow Oak often becomes too big for the area in which it was planted which can cause structural damage to streets or nearby houses.

Wood Strawberry

Fragaria vesca

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Rosales
Family: Rosaceae
Genus: *Fragaria*
Species: *F. vesca*



Characteristics: Wood Strawberry plants are 3 to 6 inches in height. They spread by runners. Flowers are white to yellow with five broad petals, and numerous green-yellow stamens, appearing May through August. The fruit appears soon after flowering and is a red berry, which is much smaller in size than our modern-grocery store variety. Its seeds are located on the surface of the fruit, rather than embedded in the skin. The stems and leaves are slightly hairy. The leaves are compound with 3 coarsely toothed leaflets that narrow and are slightly tapered toward the tip.

Habitat: Wood Strawberry grows well in dry to moist open woods, stream banks, pastures, and old fields.

Range: It is found throughout most of North America except for the southeastern United States.

Native American Uses: Wood Strawberry was used to treat colds. It was also used as a disinfectant, an oral aid, and a pediatric aid. In addition, the fresh fruit was eaten and tea was made from the leaves. The Chippewa, Dakota, and Iroquois are among the Native American tribes that utilized this species.

Colonial Uses: The leaves contain high quantities of vitamin C. Minutemen from the American Revolution were saved from scurvy by drinking a tea made from the fresh green foliage of the wild Strawberry. In addition, they would eat the fruit fresh, collect and dry some for winter use, or allow it to ferment into a wine or vinegar.

Modern Uses: Today they are not widely consumed, but can be made into preserves or used in baking.



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