

Trees & Shrubs Native to Northeastern Illinois



Scientific names are important

When buying native trees and shrubs, the scientific name identifies whether it is a true native. The scientific names of native plants do not have words in quotes. If the scientific name has a word in quotes, it is not native. For instance, Acer saccharum is native but Acer saccharum 'Legacy' is not. Plants marketed as 'nativars' are not native.

CANOPY TREES

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Type	Selection Notes
sugar maple	<u>Acer saccharum</u>	medium	full sun to shade	60-75	40-50	canopy tree	
river birch	<u>Betula nigra</u>	wet to medium	full sun	30-40	20-30	canopy tree	Flood tolerant.
bitternut hickory	<u>Carya cordiformis</u>	wet to medium	full sun to shade	50-70	40-50	canopy tree	Tolerates occasional flooding. Suitable for parkway.
pignut hickory	<u>Carya glabra</u>	medium to dry	full sun to shade	50-60	25-35	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
shagbark hickory	<u>Carya ovata</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	60-80	30-50	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
mockernut hickory	<u>Carya tomentosa</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	50-75	20-30	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
hackberry	<u>Celtis occidentalis</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	40-60	40-50	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
American beech	<u>Fagus grandifolia</u>	medium	full to part sun	50-60	40-50	canopy tree	
Kentucky coffee tree	<u>Gymnocladus dioicus</u>	medium	full sun	50-60	40-50	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
black walnut	<u>Juglans nigra</u>	medium to dry	full sun	50-60	30-50	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.

Full sun = 6 or more hours of direct sun

Part sun = 4 to 6 hours of direct sun

Shade = less than 4 hours of direct sun

CANOPY TREES, continued

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Type	Selection Notes
tamarack	<u>Larix laricina</u>	wet	full sun	40-80	30-50	canopy tree	Needles drop off in the fall. Flood tolerant.
tupelo or sour gum	<u>Nyssa sylvatica</u>	wet to medium	full sun	30-50	25-30	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
sycamore	<u>Platanus occidentalis</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	75-100	50-70	canopy tree	Flood tolerant. Suitable for parkway.
eastern cottonwood	<u>Populus deltoides</u>	wet to dry	full sun	75-100	50-75	canopy tree	Highly susceptible to wind and ice storm damage.
white oak	<u>Quercus alba</u>	medium to dry	full sun	50-80	100	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
swamp white oak	<u>Quercus bicolor</u>	wet to medium	full sun	50-60	50-60	canopy tree	Flood tolerant. Suitable for parkway.
Hill's oak	<u>Quercus ellipsoidalis</u>	dry/well-drained	full sun	40-75	40-75	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
shingle oak	<u>Quercus imbricaria</u>	medium	full to part sun	50-60	50-60	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
bur oak	<u>Quercus macrocarpa</u>	medium	full sun	70-80	70-80	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
chinquapin oak	<u>Quercus muehlenbergii</u>	medium to dry	full sun	50-80	50-70	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
pin oak	<u>Quercus palustris</u>	wet	full sun	60-70	40-50	canopy tree	Prefers acidic soil. Flood tolerant.
northern red oak	<u>Quercus rubra</u>	medium-dry	full to part sun	60-75	60-75	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
black oak	<u>Quercus velutina</u>	dry/well-drained	full to part sun	50-60	40-70	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.
basswood or linden	<u>Tilia americana</u>	medium	full to part sun	60-80	30-60	canopy tree	Suitable for parkway.

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UNDERSTORY TREES

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Type	Selection Notes
Ohio buckeye	<u>Aesculus glabra</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	20-40	20-40	understory tree	Suitable for parkway.
Juneberry or downy serviceberry	<u>Amelanchier arborea</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	15-25	10-15	understory tree	
inland shadblow	<u>Amelanchier interior</u>	dry/well-drained	full to part sun	15-25	20-30	understory tree	Tolerates alkaline soils.
Alleghany serviceberry	<u>Amelanchier laevis</u>	dry/well-drained	part sun	15-25	15-20	understory tree	Suitable for parkway.
pawpaw	<u>Asimina triloba</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	15-20	15-20	understory tree	Tolerates occasional flooding.
blue beech or musclewood	<u>Carpinus caroliniana</u>	wet to medium	full sun to shade	20-30	20-30	understory tree or large shrub	Tolerates wet sites.
eastern redbud	<u>Cercis canadensis</u>	medium	full to part sun	20-30	25-35	understory tree	
pagoda dogwood	<u>Cornus alternifolia</u>	medium	full to part sun	15-25	20-30	understory tree or large shrub	
scarlet hawthorn	<u>Crataegus coccinea</u>	medium to dry	full sun	20-30	20-35	understory tree	Caution: large thorns.
cockspur hawthorn	<u>Crataegus crus-galli</u>	medium	full sun	20-25	20-25	understory tree	Caution: large thorns.
downy hawthorn	<u>Crataegus mollis</u>	medium	part sun	20-30	20-40	understory tree	Caution: large thorns.
wahoo	<u>Euonymus atropurpureus</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	08-15	08-10	understory tree or large shrub	Tolerates occasional flooding.
witch hazel	<u>Hamamelis virginiana</u>	medium	full to part sun	10-20	15-20	understory tree or large shrub	Road salt tolerant.
prairie crabapple	<u>Malus ioensis</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	20-30	20-30	understory tree	Susceptible to foliar diseases.

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UNDERSTORY TREES, continued

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Type	Selection Notes
hop hornbeam or ironwood	<u>Ostrya virginiana</u>	medium to dry	shade to full sun	25-40	15-40	understory tree	Suitable for parkway.
chokecherry	<u>Prunus virginiana</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	10-20	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	
wafer ash	<u>Ptelea trifoliata</u>	medium to dry	full sun to shade	10-20	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	Road salt tolerant.
pussy willow	<u>Salix discolor</u>	wet-medium	full sun	10-25	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	Flood tolerant.
sassafras	<u>Sassafras albidum</u>	medium	full to part sun	20-30	25-40	understory tree	Prefers acidic soil.
nannyberry	<u>Viburnum lentago</u>	moist to dry	full to part sun	15-20	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	Tolerates occasional flooding.
blackhaw viburnum	<u>Viburnum prunifolium</u>	medium	full to part sun	12-15	08-12	understory tree or large shrub	
prickly ash	<u>Zanthoxylum americanum</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	15-25	15-20	understory tree or large shrub	Not susceptible to emerald ash borer. Forms a thicket.

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SHRUBS

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Shape	Selection Notes
leadplant	<u>Amorpha canescens</u>	medium to dry	full sun	02-04	02-04	shrub	
false indigo bush	<u>Amorpha fruticosa</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	06-15	05-15	shrub	Flood tolerant. Road salt tolerant.
black chokeberry	<u>Aronia melanocarpa</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	05-15	06-10	shrub	Road salt tolerant.
New Jersey tea	<u>Ceanothus americanus</u>	dry/well-drained	full to part sun	03-05	03-05	shrub	Road salt tolerant.
buttonbush	<u>Cephalanthus occidentalis</u>	wet to moist	full to part sun	06-12	12-18	shrub	Flood tolerant.
blue beech or musclewood	<u>Carpinus caroliniana</u>	wet to medium	full sun to shade	20-30	20-30	understory tree or large shrub	Tolerates wet sites.
pagoda dogwood	<u>Cornus alternifolia</u>	medium	full to part sun	15-25	20-30	understory tree or large shrub	
blue-fruited dogwood	<u>Cornus obliqua</u>	wet to medium	part sun	06-10	06-10	shrub	Flood tolerant.
red osier dogwood	<u>Cornus sericea</u> (<u>C.stolonifera</u>)	wet to medium	full to part sun	07-10	07-10	shrub	Forms a thicket.
hazelnut or filbert	<u>Corylus americana</u>	medium to wet	full to part sun	06-10	04-06	shrub	Forms a thicket.
bush honeysuckle	<u>Diervilla lonicera</u>	medium to dry	full sun to shade	02-03	03-05	shrub	Forms a thicket.
wahoo	<u>Euonymus atropurpureus</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	08-15	08-10	understory tree or large shrub	Tolerates occasional flooding.
witch hazel	<u>Hamamelis virginiana</u>	medium	full to part sun	10-20	15-20	understory tree or large shrub	Road salt tolerant.
wild hydrangea	<u>Hydrangea arborescens</u>	medium to wet	shade	03-05	05-08	shrub	Forms a thicket.
Kalm's St. John's wort	<u>Hypericum kalmianum</u>	moist to medium	full sun	02-03	03-06	shrub	Flood tolerant.
shrubby St. John's wort	<u>Hypericum prolificum</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	03-04	03-04	shrub	Flood tolerant.
winterberry	<u>Ilex verticillata</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	06-10	06-10	shrub	Flood tolerant. Road salt tolerant.

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SHRUBS, continued

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Shape	Selection Notes
spicebush	<u>Lindera benzoin</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	06-12	06-12	shrub	
ninebark	<u>Physocarpus opulifolius</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	06-10	06-10	shrub	Road salt tolerant.
shrubby cinquefoil	<u>Potentilla fruticosa</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	01-04	02-04	shrub	Road salt tolerant.
American plum	<u>Prunus americana</u>	dry/well-drained	full to part sun	15-25	15-25	shrub	Forms a thicket.
chokecherry	<u>Prunus virginiana</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	10-20	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	
wafer ash	<u>Ptelea trifoliata</u>	medium to dry	full sun to shade	10-20	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	Road salt tolerant.
fragrant sumac	<u>Rhus aromatica</u>	dry/well-drained	full to part sun	02-05	05-10	shrub	Forms a thicket. Road salt tolerant.
shining sumac	<u>Rhus copallina</u>	dry/well-drained	full to part sun	20-35	20-35	shrub	Forms a thicket. Road salt tolerant.
smooth sumac	<u>Rhus glabra</u>	dry/well-drained	full sun	10-15	10-15	shrub	Forms a thicket. Road salt tolerant.
wild black currant	<u>Ribes americanum</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	03-05	03-05	shrub	Flood tolerant. Forms a thicket.
prickly wild gooseberry	<u>Ribes cynosbati</u>	medium to dry	part sun	03-05	03-05	shrub	Forms a thicket.
wild gooseberry	<u>Ribes missouriense</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	03-04	03-05	shrub	Forms a thicket. Road salt tolerant.
early wild rose	<u>Rosa blanda</u>	medium to dry	full sun	04-06	04-06	shrub	Forms a thicket.
pasture rose	<u>Rosa carolina</u>	medium to dry	full sun	03-06	06-10	shrub	Forms a thicket.
scarlet rose	<u>Rosa palustris</u>	wet	part sun	03-06	03-06	shrub	Forms a thicket. Road salt tolerant.
Illinois rose	<u>Rosa setigera</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	05-08	10-15	shrub	Forms a thicket.
purple flowering raspberry	<u>Rubus odoratus</u>	medium to dry	full sun	03-06	03-10	shrub	

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SHRUBS, continued

Common Name	Scientific Name	Soil Moisture Preference	Grows Best In	Mature Height (ft)	Mature Width (ft)	Shape	Selection Notes
pussy willow	<u>Salix discolor</u>	wet-medium	full sun	10-25	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	Flood tolerant.
prairie willow	<u>Salix humilis</u>	medium	part sun	04-10	06-12	shrub	Flood tolerant. Road salt tolerant.
elderberry	<u>Sambucus canadensis</u>	medium	part to full sun	06-10	06-12	shrub	Flood tolerant. Road salt tolerant.
meadowsweet	<u>Spiraea alba</u>	wet	full sun	03-06	02-03	shrub	Flood tolerant. Road salt tolerant.
steplebush	<u>Spiraea tomentosa</u>	wet	full sun	03-04	03-06	shrub	Flood tolerant.
snowberry	<u>Symphoricarpos albus</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	03-06	03-06	shrub	
early low blueberry	<u>Vaccinium angustifolium</u>	medium to dry	full to part sun	02-03	02-04	shrub	
maple leaf viburnum	<u>Viburnum acerifolium</u>	medium to dry	part sun to shade	04-06	03-04	shrub	
nannyberry	<u>Viburnum lentago</u>	moist to dry	full to part sun	15-20	10-15	understory tree or large shrub	Tolerates occasional flooding.
American cranberry	<u>Viburnum opulus var. americanum (V. trilobum)</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	08-12	08-12	shrub	Flood tolerant. Road salt tolerant.
blackhaw viburnum	<u>Viburnum prunifolium</u>	medium	full to part sun	12-15	08-12	understory tree or large shrub	
downy arrowwood	<u>Viburnum rafinesquianum</u>	moist to dry	part sun to shade	05-06	05-06	shrub	
prickly ash	<u>Zanthoxylum americanum</u>	wet to medium	full to part sun	15-25	15-20	understory tree or large shrub	Not susceptible to emerald ash borer. Forms a thicket.

This list is limited to those native species that might generally be available from nurseries that grow trees and shrubs native to northeastern Illinois. It was developed with technical support from The Morton Arboretum and the Chicago Region Trees Initiative. For a more detailed list see 'Plants of the Chicago Region' by Swink and Wilhelm.

Updated in 2022 to incorporate findings from The Chicago Wilderness Region Urban Forest Vulnerability Assessment and Synthesis, Brandt et al. 2017.

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Tips for a successful planting:

1. Choose a species well suited to the planting area conditions. Does the site ever have standing water? Will winter road salt be an issue? Is there sun throughout the day or is it shady? When mature, will the species interfere with utility lines, traffic visibility, or buildings?
2. Plant trees that are young. Compared to larger specimens, they will be less expensive, require a smaller hole, recover more quickly from transplant shock, and need less watering while getting established.
3. Plant and mulch properly. Be prepared to provide weekly supplemental watering for the first three growing seasons.

Why plant native?

1. The trees and shrubs that grew in northeastern Illinois prior to European settlement are essential to the wildlife of this region. Most of the songbirds, pollinators, and other wildlife of the region depend on the native species on this list because of intricate life cycle requirements. They cannot survive solely on the European and Asian plants that now cover so much of our suburban and urban landscape.
2. Genetic diversity is another reason to use native species. Cultivars are cloned and lack genetic diversity. Cultivars marketed as natives are also clones. Any type of genetic alteration to a native species may interfere with critical wildlife needs. Native species are essential to the genetic stability and the ecological resilience of this region.



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