



NORTH AMERICAN
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

*Dedicated to the study,
conservation, cultivation,
and restoration
of North America's
native flora*

Native Shrubs for Wildlife

Great Lakes Bioregion

by Tom Atkinson

Each shrub described here provides food or nesting comfort for wildlife. In turn, we are enriched by the visitors to these plants over the four seasons. The numbers and variety of wildlife increase in direct relation to the numbers and variety of native shrubs planted. I have observed this in my own garden, which I've been naturalizing for more than three decades.

It is easy to propagate new plants from the seeds of many of the shrubs on this information sheet.

Shrubs may be defined as “perennial plants with usually more than one low-branching woody stem.” — *Shrubs of Ontario*

Some of the shrubs described in this information sheet may also be considered trees.

Juneberry *Amelanchier species*

Juneberries, or Shadbush, are shrubs and small trees. Their beauty — smooth, grey-striped trunk, flowers, berries, and autumn colour — will turn anyone into an admirer. For those who garden in areas where the soil is not heavily acidic and blueberries are not easily cultivated, Juneberry is a great alternative. Flowers are white, on dense racemes in spring. Fruit is a juicy, blue-black berry, ripe in summer. Ranges from southern New Brunswick to Minnesota, and south to Oklahoma and northern Florida. Fall leaf colour is burgundy to scarlet red. Grows in sun or shade.



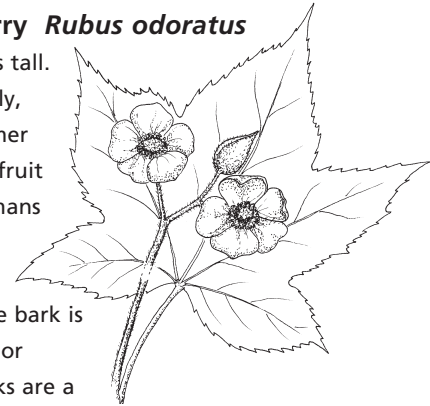
American hazelnut *Corylus americana*

American hazelnut will never be the belle of the ball. Its strong suits are delicious nuts, favoured by humans and wildlife, beautifully understated leaf colour in autumn, and

its ability to form a hedgerow that is bountiful and thick, providing shelter for birds and other creatures. The leaves are very coarse in texture, and the shrub can attain heights of 2 to 3 metres. Flowers are catkins (male), while the female ones are in tiny clusters with red stigmas protruding. It grows from Maine and southwest Quebec to Saskatchewan, and south to Oklahoma and Georgia. Tolerates dry soil; sun or shade.

Purple-flowering raspberry *Rubus odoratus*

An erect shrub, 1 to 1.5 metres tall. Bumblebees pollinate the lovely, rose-coloured flowers. In summer there is a large, raspberry-red fruit which is insipid in taste to humans but perhaps not to birds or squirrels. The leaf is similar to that of a sugar maple tree. The bark is cinnamon coloured, and peels or exfoliates. In winter these stalks are a delight as they poke out of deep snowbanks. Purple-flowering raspberry favours very moist sites in nature. In a garden setting, it is not so demanding, and grows in sun or shade. It spreads via underground runners. The range is Nova Scotia to Michigan, south to Tennessee and Georgia.



Pawpaw *Asimina triloba*

Pawpaw is a true delight, and rare when found in southern Ontario. In Indiana and southwestern Michigan it is more abundant. In the wild, it is most prevalent on moist, fertile, alluvial soil; the closer you match those conditions, the faster and more robust the growth. In youth, it requires shade to simulate its understory nature. After a few years, increased sunlight will stimulate growth. This shrubby tree can attain a height of 3 to 5 metres, and often suckers. Flowers are 3-lobed, maroon and pollinated by carrion flies. Growers sometimes will leave a dead animal in a grove of Pawpaws to increase flower pollination and fruit yield. The fruit has a custardy banana flavour (some people have a severe allergic reaction to the fruit). Autumn leaf colour is a deep, rich yellow. This is the most northern of the tropical custard apple family. Possums and squirrels adore the fruit. Get two for your garden!

