

TRACE CREEK TREES & SHRUBS

Middle Tennessee Planting Guides — Organized by Category

These guides are written for bare root stock and tailored to Middle Tennessee conditions (Zone 7a–7b). Fall planting (Oct–Dec) is often ideal for most species. Water deeply during the first 1–2 years.

SHADE TREES

These large-canopy trees are perfect for providing cooling shade, establishing a focal point, and adding long-term value to your property.

American Beech

Fagus grandifolia

Majestic native shade tree with smooth gray bark and golden-bronze fall color. Excellent for large properties.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic to neutral soils. Dislikes compaction.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate to high; prefers consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Plant fall or early spring at correct depth. Mulch well.

Spacing: 40–60 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow-moderate. 50–80+ ft tall. Very long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Beechnuts important for birds and mammals.

Notes: Sensitive to root disturbance. Best for larger properties away from construction.

Bald Cypress

Taxodium distichum

Deciduous conifer with feathery foliage turning copper-orange in fall. Outstanding for wet sites and creek banks.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist soils, including periodic flooding. Tolerates heavy clay.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: High; tolerates standing water once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Plant slightly higher in very wet sites. Good for spring or fall.

Spacing: 20–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 50–70 ft tall. Buttressed trunk in wet conditions.

Wildlife Value: Habitat and seeds for birds and aquatic wildlife.

Notes: One of the best trees for wet areas and creek stabilization in Middle TN.

Black Walnut

Juglans nigra

Native nut producer with valuable timber and strong wildlife value. Releases juglone that affects some plants.

Site & Soil: Deep, fertile, well-drained loam. Avoid compacted or very wet soils.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Handle taproot carefully. Water well first years.

Spacing: 40–60 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-slow. 50–70+ ft tall. Long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Nuts eaten by squirrels, deer, turkeys.

Notes: Juglone can inhibit tomatoes, potatoes, and some other plants nearby. Good for open areas and timber/wildlife plantings.

Burr Oak

Quercus macrocarpa

Tough, durable native oak with large acorns. Very adaptable and long-lived.

Site & Soil: Wide range of soils; tolerates clay and occasional dry conditions.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low to moderate once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall planting ideal. Protect young trees from deer.

Spacing: 40–60 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow-moderate. Can reach 60–80 ft. Extremely long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Large acorns important wildlife food.

Notes: Excellent tough oak for Middle TN. Good for open landscapes and wildlife.

Hickory

Carya spp. (Shagbark/Shellbark)

Premium native nut tree with strong wood and excellent wildlife value.

Site & Soil: Deep, well-drained fertile soils. Avoid very wet or compacted sites.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Long taproot — plant carefully.

Spacing: 40–60 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 60–80+ ft tall. Long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Nuts highly valued by wildlife.

Notes: Great long-term investment tree. Choose shagbark or shellbark for Middle TN.

Lombardy Poplar

Populus nigra 'Italica'

Fast-growing columnar tree useful for quick screens, windbreaks, and vertical accents.

Site & Soil: Adaptable; prefers moist well-drained soils but tolerates a range.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Grows very fast initially.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart for screens.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 40–60 ft tall but relatively short-lived (30–50 years).

Wildlife Value: Provides quick cover; seeds eaten by birds.

Notes: Best used as a temporary screen or windbreak. Not a long-term specimen tree.

Pin Oak

Quercus palustris

Popular landscape oak with pyramidal form and excellent red fall color. Tolerates wetter soils.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet, well-drained soils. Tolerates clay and occasional flooding.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Good drainage helps long-term health.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 50–70 ft tall with pyramidal shape when young.

Wildlife Value: Acorns provide wildlife food.

Notes: One of the most popular oaks for landscapes due to form and fall color.

Poplar (Tulip)

Liriodendron tulipifera

Tennessee state tree. Fast-growing with unique tulip-shaped flowers and straight trunk.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, fertile soils. Avoid very dry or compacted sites.

Sun: Full sun to light shade.

Water: Moderate to high when young.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and water well first years.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 60–90+ ft tall with straight trunk.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators; seeds eaten by birds.

Notes: Excellent fast shade tree. Beautiful flowers in spring. Can get very tall.

Post Oak

Quercus stellata

Drought-tolerant native oak good for upland and drier sites.

Site & Soil: Well-drained to dry soils. Tolerates poor, rocky, or sandy conditions.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low once established. Very drought tolerant.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall planting preferred. Good for tougher sites.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 40–60 ft tall. Rounded crown.

Wildlife Value: Acorns important for wildlife.

Notes: Tough oak for drier or poorer soils where other oaks may struggle.

Quaking Aspen

Populus tremuloides

Beautiful tree with trembling leaves and bright yellow fall color. Forms clonal colonies.

Site & Soil: Cool, moist, well-drained soils. Prefers northern or higher elevation sites in our region.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Best in cooler microclimates. Mulch to keep roots cool.
Spacing: 15–30 ft apart for groves.
Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 40–60 ft tall. Often grows in colonies.
Wildlife Value: Important for many wildlife species; buds and bark eaten by various animals.
Notes: Best in cooler or higher elevation sites in Middle TN. Beautiful movement and fall color.

Red Maple

Acer rubrum

Highly adaptable native maple with outstanding red to orange fall color. One of the best all-around choices.

Site & Soil: Very adaptable — clay, loam, occasional wet. Prefers slightly acidic.
Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best color in sun.
Water: Moderate. Tolerates both moist and average conditions.
Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and water first two summers.
Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.
Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 40–60 ft tall with rounded crown.
Wildlife Value: Seeds and buds provide food for birds and wildlife.
Notes: Reliable and beautiful. Can develop surface roots — plant away from sidewalks if possible.

Red Oak

Quercus rubra

Fast-growing oak with excellent red fall color and good timber value.

Site & Soil: Deep, well-drained loam to clay loam. Avoid very wet sites.
Sun: Full sun.
Water: Moderate.
Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Good drainage important.
Spacing: 40–60 ft apart.
Mature Size / Growth: Fast for an oak. 60–75 ft tall. Rounded crown.
Wildlife Value: Acorns important wildlife food.
Notes: One of the faster-growing oaks. Good choice when quicker shade is desired.

Silver Maple

Acer saccharinum

Very fast-growing maple with silver undersides on leaves. Good for quick shade.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils. Tolerates occasional flooding and clay.
Sun: Full sun to partial shade.
Water: High when young. Prefers consistent moisture.
Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Grows very fast initially.
Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.
Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 50–70 ft tall. Can be brittle in storms.
Wildlife Value: Seeds eaten by many birds and mammals.
Notes: Excellent for quick shade but can be short-lived and brittle. Best in open areas.

Sweet Gum

Liquidambar styraciflua

Star-shaped leaves with excellent fall color (reds, oranges, purples). Interesting spiky seed balls.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates clay if not compacted.
Sun: Full sun to partial shade.
Water: Moderate.
Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch well.
Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.
Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 60–80 ft tall. Pyramidal when young.
Wildlife Value: Seeds eaten by birds; provides cover.
Notes: Beautiful fall color. Spiky seed balls can be a nuisance near walkways — consider placement.

Sycamore

Platanus occidentalis

Massive native tree with beautiful exfoliating bark. Great for large landscapes and wetter areas.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet, well-drained soils. Tolerates flooding and clay.
Sun: Full sun.

Water: High. Naturally grows along streams.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Water well during establishment.

Spacing: 40–70 ft apart for large specimens.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 70–100+ ft tall with massive trunk and wide crown.

Wildlife Value: Seeds eaten by birds; provides important habitat.

Notes: Excellent for large properties and creek banks. Very large at maturity — give it space.

Water Oak

Quercus nigra

Fast-growing oak that tolerates wetter sites. Semi-evergreen tendencies in southern parts of our region.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils. Tolerates clay and occasional flooding.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Good for wetter areas.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 50–70 ft tall. Rounded crown.

Wildlife Value: Acorns provide wildlife food.

Notes: Good fast oak for wetter sites in Middle TN.

Weeping Willow

Salix babylonica

Classic weeping form. Very fast-growing and loves water.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils. Excellent for creek banks and low spots.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: High. Naturally grows in wet areas.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Grows extremely fast.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart. Keep away from septic systems and pipes.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 30–50 ft tall with wide weeping crown.

Wildlife Value: Provides cover and some food for wildlife.

Notes: Beautiful but can be messy and aggressive roots. Best near water features, not near foundations or pipes.

White Oak

Quercus alba

Iconic native oak. Slow-growing but extremely long-lived with outstanding wildlife value.

Site & Soil: Deep, well-drained loam. Tolerates some clay if not compacted.

Sun: Full sun to light shade.

Water: Moderate. Drought tolerant once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall planting ideal. Protect young trees from deer.

Spacing: 40–60+ ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 60–80+ ft tall. Very long-lived (300+ years).

Wildlife Value: Acorns are critical wildlife food.

Notes: A true legacy tree. Plant for future generations. More shade tolerant when young than many oaks.

Willow Oak

Quercus phellos

Fine-textured foliage and fast growth. Good street or landscape oak.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates some clay.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 50–70 ft tall with rounded crown.

Wildlife Value: Acorns provide wildlife food.

Notes: Good fast-growing oak with finer texture than many other oaks.

ORNAMENTAL TREES

These trees are chosen for their visual appeal—such as unique blooms, bark, or seasonal color—making them excellent specimen plants.

Black Willow

Salix nigra

Native riparian willow excellent for creek stabilization and wet areas. Fast-growing with graceful form.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist soils. Excellent for stream banks and low spots.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: High. Naturally grows in wet areas.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Very fast grower.

Spacing: 20–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 30–50 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed.

Wildlife Value: Provides cover and habitat along waterways.

Notes: Great for erosion control and wet sites. Can be aggressive — best near water features.

Chestnut

Castanea spp. (Blight-resistant hybrids)

Fast-growing shade tree that produces sweet nuts. Blight-resistant hybrids recommended.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, acidic to neutral soils. Avoid very wet or alkaline sites.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and water first years.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 40–60 ft tall. Produces nuts in 5–10 years on good hybrids.

Wildlife Value: Nuts eaten by wildlife and humans.

Notes: Choose blight-resistant hybrids for best results. Good dual-purpose shade + edible tree.

Loblolly Pine

Pinus taeda

Fastest-growing pine in Middle TN. Excellent for quick screens, timber, and wildlife cover.

Site & Soil: Well-drained to moist soils. Tolerates a wide range including clay.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to low once established. Very adaptable.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Fast grower.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart for screens; wider for timber.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 60–90+ ft tall. Pyramidal when young.

Wildlife Value: Provides important cover and seeds for wildlife.

Notes: Best fast evergreen for quick privacy or timber in our region.

Lucy Althea Hibiscus

Hibiscus syriacus 'Lucy'

Rose of Sharon cultivar with large, showy pink-lavender blooms from summer into fall. Easy and reliable.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils. Prefers well-drained but tolerates clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Very easy to grow.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 8–12 ft tall. Can be kept smaller with pruning.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract hummingbirds and bees. Provides cover.

Notes: Long-blooming and low-maintenance. Great for summer color. Can self-seed.

Mimosa

Albizia julibrissin

Fast-growing tree with fluffy pink summer flowers and fern-like foliage. Can be aggressive/self-seeds.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to poor soils. Tolerates drought and heat well.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low once established. Very drought tolerant.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Grows very fast.

Spacing: 20–30 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 20–30 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed. Short-lived.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators. Seeds eaten by wildlife.

Notes: Fast and showy but can be weedy/invasive in some areas. Use with awareness.

Red Crepe Myrtle

Lagerstroemia indica (Red)

Summer-blooming tree/shrub with vibrant red flowers, attractive bark, and excellent heat/drought tolerance.

Site & Soil: Well-drained soils. Tolerates clay and poor soils once established.

Sun: Full sun for best blooming.

Water: Low to moderate. Very heat and drought tolerant.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Mulch to conserve moisture first years.

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart depending on form.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 10–20 ft tall. Can be grown as multi-stem or tree form.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators. Attractive bark in winter.

Notes: Excellent summer color and heat tolerance. Prune in late winter/early spring for best form and blooms.

Redbud

Cercis canadensis

Beloved native understory tree with stunning pink-purple spring flowers before leaves emerge.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils. Prefers moist, well-drained. Tolerates clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best flowering in sun or light shade.

Water: Moderate. Benefits from consistent moisture during establishment.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch to keep roots cool.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart. Beautiful in groups or woodland edges.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 20–30 ft tall with rounded to spreading form.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar for bees and butterflies. Seeds eaten by birds.

Notes: Tennessee state tree. One of the best small flowering trees for our region.

Southern Magnolia

Magnolia grandiflora

Evergreen icon of the South with huge, fragrant white summer flowers and glossy leaves.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, fertile soils. Prefers acidic. Protect from harsh winter winds when young.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best flowering in sun.

Water: Moderate to high. Consistent moisture improves performance.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Mulch heavily. Protect young plants from winter sun/wind.

Spacing: 20–40 ft apart. Can be used as large screen or specimen.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 40–60+ ft tall with dense evergreen crown.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators. Seeds eaten by birds.

Notes: Classic Southern evergreen. Give it room — it gets large. Beautiful fragrant blooms.

Sweet Bay Magnolia

Magnolia virginiana

Semi-evergreen native with lemon-scented white flowers. Excellent for wetter sites.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates occasional flooding and clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: High. Naturally grows in wet areas.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Good for wet sites.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 20–40 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed. Semi-evergreen in our region.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators. Seeds eaten by birds.

Notes: Great native magnolia for wetter sites. Fragrant flowers. More cold-hardy than Southern Magnolia.

Virginia Pine

Pinus virginiana

Native pine good for poor, dry, or rocky soils. Provides excellent wildlife cover.

Site & Soil: Well-drained to dry, poor soils. Very adaptable and tough.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low once established. Excellent drought tolerance.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Very tough and adaptable.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart for screens.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 40–60 ft tall. Often has crooked or leaning trunk.

Wildlife Value: Provides important cover and seeds for wildlife.

Notes: Best pine for poor or dry sites. Great for wildlife cover and erosion control on slopes.

White Dogwood

Cornus florida

Classic native flowering tree with showy white spring bracts, red fall berries, and beautiful branching habit.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic soil rich in organic matter. Dislikes heavy compacted clay.

Sun: Partial shade to full sun. Best with afternoon shade in hot areas.

Water: Moderate to high. Consistent moisture important.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch well. Protect from harsh afternoon sun when young.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart. Beautiful specimen or woodland edge tree.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 15–25 ft tall with characteristic horizontal branching.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar and fall berries for birds. Excellent wildlife tree.

Notes: Tennessee state flower tree. Can be susceptible to anthracnose if stressed — good site selection and air circulation help.

Witch Hazel

Hamamelis virginiana

Native shrub/tree with fragrant yellow flowers in late fall to early winter. Shade tolerant and medicinal uses.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic to neutral soils. Tolerates some clay.

Sun: Partial shade to full sun. Best flowering in sun or light shade.

Water: Moderate. Prefers consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Good understory plant.

Spacing: 10–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 15–25 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed. Flowers late fall/winter.

Wildlife Value: Late-season nectar for pollinators. Seeds eaten by wildlife.

Notes: Unique late-season blooms. Excellent for woodland gardens and shade. Native and adaptable.

FRUIT TREES AND VINES

Perfect for edible landscaping, these plants provide both aesthetic beauty and delicious harvests.

Brown Turkey Fig

Ficus carica 'Brown Turkey'

Reliable, productive fig well-suited to Middle Tennessee. Sweet brown figs ripen over a long season.

Site & Soil: Well-drained soil. Tolerates clay if drainage is adequate. Avoid very wet sites.

Sun: Full sun for best fruit production.

Water: Moderate. More drought tolerant than many fruits once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring after frost. Water deeply and mulch. Can be planted slightly deeper.

Spacing: 12–20 ft apart. Can be grown multi-stem or trained as small tree.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast when young. 10–20 ft tall. Fruit ripens late summer to early fall.

Wildlife Value: Fruit loved by birds, squirrels, and humans.

Notes: One of the most reliable figs for our region. Self-fertile. May die back in severe winters but resprouts from roots.

Catawba Grapevine

Vitis labrusca 'Catawba'

Classic American grape with deep red-purple fruit. Excellent for juice, jelly, and wine.

Site & Soil: Well-drained loam to sandy loam. Good drainage essential. Tolerates a range of soils.

Sun: Full sun for best ripening and production.

Water: Moderate. Consistent moisture during fruit development helps quality.

Planting (Bare Root): Early spring. Provide sturdy trellis or arbor immediately. Prune annually.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart on trellis/arbor.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. Vigorous grower. Fruit ripens late summer to early fall.

Wildlife Value: Fruit eaten by birds and wildlife. Provides cover on arbors.

Notes: Very reliable and productive in Middle TN. Self-fertile. Requires annual pruning for best results.

Concord Grapevine

Vitis labrusca 'Concord'

America's most popular native grape. Sweet blue-black grapes excellent for fresh eating, jelly, juice, and wine.

Site & Soil: Well-drained loam to sandy loam. Good drainage important.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate. Benefits from consistent moisture during fruit development.

Planting (Bare Root): Early spring. Sturdy support required. Annual pruning essential.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart on trellis or arbor.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast vigorous growth. Fruit ripens late summer.

Wildlife Value: Fruit highly valued by birds and humans.

Notes: Extremely reliable in our climate. Self-fertile. Classic choice for jelly and fresh eating.

Mulberry

Morus rubra / alba

Fast-growing tree with sweet berries loved by birds and people. Easy and productive.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils. Prefers well-drained but tolerates a range.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Low to moderate once established. Very adaptable.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Grows very fast.

Spacing: 20–40 ft apart. Can be kept smaller with pruning.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 30–50 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed or wide-spreading.

Wildlife Value: Berries are a favorite of many bird species. Great for wildlife.

Notes: Very easy and productive. Can be messy when fruit drops — plant away from patios/walkways. Birds love it.

Niagara Grapevine

Vitis labrusca 'Niagara'

White table grape with sweet, juicy fruit. Vigorous and productive. Good for arbors and fresh eating.

Site & Soil: Well-drained loam to sandy loam. Good drainage important.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Early spring. Provide strong support. Prune annually.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart on trellis or arbor.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast vigorous growth. Fruit ripens mid to late summer.

Wildlife Value: Fruit eaten by birds and wildlife.

Notes: Reliable white grape for Middle TN. Self-fertile. Excellent for fresh eating and arbors.

Pecan

Carya illinoensis

Iconic Southern nut tree. Produces delicious pecans and provides excellent shade and wildlife value.

Site & Soil: Deep, fertile, well-drained loam. Good drainage important for long-term health.

Sun: Full sun for best nut production.

Water: Moderate to high when young. Consistent moisture improves nut fill.

Planting (Bare Root): Late fall or early spring. Long taproot — handle carefully when planting.

Spacing: 40–60 ft apart for good cross-pollination.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 60–80+ ft tall. Long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Nuts highly valued by wildlife and humans.

Notes: Requires a compatible pollinator variety for best production. Choose cultivars suited to Middle TN.

Persimmon

Diospyros virginiana

Native tree with sweet orange fruit in fall. Beautiful fall color and excellent wildlife value.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils including clay. Prefers well-drained. Tolerates drought once established.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Low to moderate once established. Very adaptable.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and water first years.

Spacing: 20–40 ft apart. Can be multi-stemmed.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 30–50 ft tall. Rounded crown. Fruit ripens after first frost.

Wildlife Value: Fruit highly valued by wildlife (deer, birds, etc.).

Notes: Native and tough. Fruit is astringent until fully ripe/soft. Great for wildlife and edible landscaping.

Spicy Satin Plumcot

Prunus hybrid (Plum x Apricot)

Unique hybrid with flavorful fruit combining plum and apricot qualities. Beautiful spring blooms.

Site & Soil: Well-drained loam to sandy loam. Good drainage important.

Sun: Full sun for best fruit production.

Water: Moderate. Consistent moisture during fruit development helps.

Planting (Bare Root): Early spring after frost. Mulch and water well first years.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart. Requires cross-pollinator for best production.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–25 ft tall. Attractive spring blooms. Fruit ripens early to mid-summer.

Wildlife Value: Fruit and flowers attract pollinators and birds.

Notes: Unique and flavorful. Choose a compatible pollinator variety. Good dual-purpose ornamental + edible tree.

Wild Plum

Prunus americana / angustifolia

Native thicket-forming plum with white spring flowers and small sweet-tart fruit. Great for wildlife and naturalizing.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils including poor or dry. Tolerates clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Low to moderate. Very adaptable.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Can spread by suckers — good for naturalizing.

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart. Forms thickets.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 10–20 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed thicket. Fruit ripens summer.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; fruit for birds and mammals. Excellent wildlife plant.

Notes: Native and tough. Great for hedgerows, naturalizing, and wildlife. Can spread — plant where spreading is welcome.

SHRUBS AND HEDGES

These mid-to-lower level plants are ideal for creating privacy screens, defining property lines, or adding bursts of color and fragrance to your yard.

Button Bush

Cephalanthus occidentalis

Native wetland shrub with unique spherical white flowers that attract many pollinators. Excellent for wet areas.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist soils. Tolerates standing water and heavy clay. Perfect for rain gardens and creek banks.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: High. Naturally grows in wet areas.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Great for wet or low spots.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart. Spreads by suckers.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 6–12 ft tall. Rounded form. Unique flowers in summer.

Wildlife Value: Excellent pollinator plant. Seeds eaten by birds. Important wetland habitat.

Notes: One of the best native shrubs for wet sites and pollinators. Unique flowers. Can spread in ideal conditions.

Carolina Allspice

Calycanthus floridus

Native sweetshrub with fragrant maroon flowers in spring. Shade tolerant and great for understory or foundation plantings.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, fertile soils. Tolerates some clay. Prefers acidic to neutral.

Sun: Partial shade to full sun. Best flowering in sun or light shade.

Water: Moderate. Prefers consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Good understory plant.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 6–10 ft tall. Rounded, multi-stemmed. Fragrant flowers in spring.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators. Provides cover.

Notes: Native and adaptable. Fragrant flowers. Excellent for shade or part-shade gardens and foundation plantings.

Deciduous Holly

Ilex decidua / verticillata

Native holly with bright red winter berries on female plants. Excellent for birds and winter interest.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet, well-drained soils. Tolerates clay and occasional flooding.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate to high. Prefers consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Plant both male and female for berries.

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart. Can be used in groups or hedges.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 10–20 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed. Bright red berries persist into winter.

Wildlife Value: Berries are a critical winter food source for many birds.

Notes: Great native alternative to evergreen hollies. Plant both sexes for berries. Excellent for wildlife and winter interest.

Elderberry

Sambucus canadensis

Fast-growing native shrub with large white flower clusters in early summer and dark purple berries. Great for wildlife and edible uses.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist soils. Tolerates heavy clay and poor drainage. Excellent for wet areas.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best flowering/fruiting in sun.

Water: High. Naturally grows in wet areas.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Can be planted in low/wet spots.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart. Spreads by suckers — good for naturalizing.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 6–12 ft tall. Can be kept smaller with pruning. Berries ripen late summer.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract pollinators. Berries highly valued by birds (and humans for syrups/jams).

Notes: Native and very adaptable. Great for wet sites, rain gardens, and wildlife. Can spread — manage as needed.

Forsythia

Forsythia x intermedia

Classic early spring bloomer with bright yellow flowers. Fast-growing and easy for hedges or slopes.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils. Prefers well-drained but tolerates a range.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best flowering in full sun.

Water: Low to moderate once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Very easy and fast.

Spacing: 4–8 ft apart for hedges.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 6–10 ft tall. Can be kept smaller with pruning. Blooms very early spring.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar for pollinators. Provides cover.

Notes: Reliable and tough. Great for quick hedges or erosion control on slopes. Prune after flowering for best shape.

Hazelnut

Corylus americana

Native shrub that produces delicious nuts. Good for hedgerows and wildlife plantings.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates a range including clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and water first years.

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart. Can form thickets.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 8–15 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed. Nuts ripen fall.

Wildlife Value: Nuts eaten by wildlife (squirrels, birds, etc.). Provides cover.

Notes: Native and productive. Good for edible hedgerows and wildlife. Can spread by suckers.

Privet

Ligustrum sinense / japonicum

Fast, dense hedge shrub. Semi-evergreen to evergreen. Easy to shear and very adaptable.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils including poor and dry. Tolerates clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Low once established. Very tough and drought tolerant.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Grows very fast. Easy to establish.

Spacing: 3–6 ft apart for dense hedge.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 8–15+ ft tall if unpruned. Can be kept much smaller with regular shearing.

Wildlife Value: Provides cover and some food for birds.

Notes: Excellent fast hedge but can be aggressive/self-seeds in some areas. Use responsibly and shear regularly for best results.

Red Hibiscus

Hibiscus spp. (Red)

Bold tropical-looking red blooms that attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Easy and showy summer color.

Site & Soil: Well-drained to moist soils. Prefers fertile soil but adaptable.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best flowering in full sun.

Water: Moderate to high. Consistent moisture improves blooming.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring after frost or fall. Mulch and water well first year.

Spacing: 4–8 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 4–8 ft tall. Can be kept smaller with pruning. Long summer bloom period.

Wildlife Value: Flowers highly attractive to hummingbirds and pollinators.

Notes: Showy and easy. Great for summer color and pollinators. May die back in winter but returns reliably in our region.

Spice Bush

Lindera benzoin

Native understory shrub with early yellow flowers, aromatic leaves, and red berries. Great for shade gardens and wildlife.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, fertile soils. Tolerates some clay. Prefers acidic to neutral.

Sun: Partial to full shade. Tolerates sun with adequate moisture.

Water: Moderate to high. Prefers consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Excellent understory plant.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 6–12 ft tall. Rounded, multi-stemmed. Early spring flowers; red berries in fall.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar for pollinators. Berries eaten by birds. Host plant for spicebush swallowtail.

Notes: Native and excellent for shade. Aromatic leaves. Great wildlife value and early season interest.

Staghorn Sumac

Rhus typhina

Native thicket shrub with dramatic red fall color and velvety branches. Great for naturalizing and poor soils.

Site & Soil: Well-drained to dry, poor soils. Very adaptable and tough. Tolerates drought and poor conditions.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Low once established. Excellent drought tolerance.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Very tough and easy.

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart. Spreads by suckers — good for naturalizing.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 10–20 ft tall. Often forms thickets. Dramatic red fall color.

Wildlife Value: Fruit clusters provide winter food for birds. Provides cover.

Notes: Native and very tough. Great for poor soils, slopes, and naturalizing. Can spread — plant where spreading is acceptable.

Viburnum

Viburnum spp. (native cultivars)

Versatile native shrubs with spring flowers, fall color or berries, and excellent wildlife value. Many great cultivars available.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils. Most tolerate clay if not waterlogged. Varies slightly by species/cultivar.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade depending on cultivar.

Water: Moderate. Most prefer consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and water first years.

Spacing: 6–12 ft apart depending on mature size.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. Size varies widely by cultivar (6–15+ ft). Many have excellent fall color or berries.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; berries for birds. Excellent all-around wildlife shrubs.

Notes: Highly recommended group. Choose cultivars suited to your site (wet/dry, sun/shade). Many have multi-season interest.

Weigela (Pink/Red)

Weigela florida

Popular spring-blooming shrub with tubular pink or red flowers that attract hummingbirds. Easy and reliable.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils. Prefers well-drained but tolerates clay if not waterlogged.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade. Best flowering in full sun.

Water: Moderate. Benefits from consistent moisture during establishment and bloom.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Very easy to grow.

Spacing: 4–8 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 4–8 ft tall and wide. Can be pruned after flowering.

Wildlife Value: Spring flowers highly attractive to hummingbirds and bees.

Notes: Reliable and low-maintenance. Great for spring color and hummingbirds. Reblooming cultivars available.
