
TRACE CREEK

Trees & Shrubs

Middle Tennessee Bare-Root Planting Guide

Detailed Species Instructions for Successful Establishment

Comprehensive guides for bare-root shade trees, ornamentals, fruit & nut trees, conifers, and shrubs adapted to Middle Tennessee soils and climate (USDA Zones 6b–7b). Fall planting (October–December) is often ideal. Water deeply during the first 1–2 years.

White Bluff • Asbland City • Greater Nashville Area
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General Bare-Root Planting Instructions

These core practices give bare-root trees and shrubs the best chance of thriving in Middle Tennessee's clay-influenced soils and humid summers. Follow them for every plant, then use the species pages for specific needs.

1. Timing

Plant while dormant — ideally late October through early March. Avoid planting after buds swell.

2. Keep Roots Moist

Never let bare roots dry out. Store cool and shaded with roots in damp material until planting.

3. Dig Wide, Not Deep

Hole 2–3× wider than the root system, no deeper than the roots. Root flare at or slightly above finished grade.

4. Backfill with Native Soil

Spread roots outward. Backfill with the soil you removed. Heavy amending can create a bathtub effect in clay.

5. Mulch the Donut

2–3 inches of shredded bark in a wide ring. Keep mulch 2–3 inches away from the trunk. No volcanoes.

6. Water Deeply

Deep soak once or twice weekly the first two growing seasons when rain is less than 1 inch. 5–15 gallons depending on size.

7. Protect

Guard against deer, rabbits, and string trimmers for 2–3 years. Stake only if necessary; remove after one year.

Call 811 before you dig.

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Fruit Trees

Fruiting trees and vines for home orchards, wildlife, and edible landscapes. Most need full sun and good air circulation.

Apricot

Prunus armeniaca

Early-blooming stone fruit with sweet-tart fruit. Needs careful site selection in Middle TN due to late frost risk.

Site & Soil: Well-drained loam; avoid heavy wet clay and low frost pockets.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate; consistent moisture during fruit development.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Plant on a slight rise if possible for air drainage.

Spacing: 15–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–25 ft tall. Can begin fruiting in 3–5 years.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for early pollinators; fruit for wildlife and people.

Notes: Protect blossoms from late freezes. Good air circulation reduces disease.

Brown Turkey Fig

Ficus carica 'Brown Turkey'

Reliable fig for Middle TN with brownish-purple fruit. Can be grown as a multi-stem shrub or small tree.

Site & Soil: Well-drained; tolerates clay if not waterlogged. Prefers fertile soil.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate; consistent moisture improves fruit size.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring after frost or fall. Protect first winters in colder microclimates.

Spacing: 10–15 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 10–15 ft tall. Produces on new and old wood depending on winter.

Wildlife Value: Fruit eaten by birds and wildlife.

Notes: May die back in hard winters but usually resprouts and fruits on new growth.

Catawba Grapevine

Vitis labrusca 'Catawba'

Classic American grape with pinkish-red fruit. Excellent for juice, jelly, and fresh eating.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, slightly acidic soils. Avoid poorly drained sites.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Needs sturdy trellis or arbor from the start.

Spacing: 8–10 ft between vines.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. Vines can reach 15–20+ ft with support. Heavy annual pruning required.

Wildlife Value: Flowers and fruit attract wildlife; good cover.

Notes: Train to a two-wire or four-arm Kniffin system. Prune hard in late winter.

Concord Grapevine

Vitis labrusca 'Concord'

The classic blue-black American grape. Extremely reliable and productive in Middle TN.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, slightly acidic soils.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Establish on strong trellis.

Spacing: 8–10 ft between vines.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. Productive once established. Requires annual dormant pruning.

Wildlife Value: Fruit highly attractive to birds.

Notes: Best flavor develops when fully ripe. Netting may be needed to protect crop.

Niagara Grapevine

Vitis labrusca 'Niagara'

White American grape with sweet flavor. Excellent for juice and fresh eating.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, slightly acidic soils.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Same culture as Concord.

Spacing: 8–10 ft between vines.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. Similar vigor to Concord.

Wildlife Value: Attracts birds and pollinators.

Notes: Reliable and productive. Prune annually in late winter.

Mulberry

Morus spp. (esp. Morus rubra / alba hybrids)

Fast-growing tree with abundant sweet fruit. Excellent for wildlife and quick shade.

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

Sun: Full sun to light shade.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Very easy to establish.

Spacing: 20–30 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 30–50 ft tall. Can fruit young.

Wildlife Value: Fruit is a major food source for birds and mammals.

Notes: Can be messy near patios and walkways. Great for wildlife plantings and quick shade.

Persimmon

Diospyros virginiana

Native American persimmon. Astringent until fully soft-ripe, then delicious. Tough and adaptable.

Site & Soil: Well-drained; tolerates clay and a range of conditions.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low to moderate once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Handle carefully.

Spacing: 20–25 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 30–50 ft tall. Long-lived. Fruit in fall.

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

Notes: Native and very tough. Plant both sexes or a self-fruitful cultivar for reliable crops.

Au Rosa Plum

Prunus salicina hybrid

Japanese-type plum with attractive fruit. Needs a pollinator for best crops in most cases.

Site & Soil: Well-drained loam. Avoid waterlogged sites.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Prune to open-center form.

Spacing: 15–18 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 12–18 ft tall. Fruit in summer.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; fruit for wildlife and people.

Notes: Cross-pollination recommended. Good air circulation helps reduce disease.

Spring Satin Plumcot

Prunus hybrid (plum × apricot)

Plum-apricot hybrid with unique flavor. Often more self-fertile than pure Japanese plums.

Site & Soil: Well-drained soils.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 12–15 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 12–18 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Attractive flowers and fruit.

Notes: Benefits from nearby stone-fruit pollinators. Protect from late frosts if possible.

Wild Plum

Prunus americana / angustifolia

Native plum that forms thickets. Excellent wildlife plant with early white flowers and small fruit.

Site & Soil: Adaptable; native to TN. Tolerates a range of soils.

Sun: Full sun to part shade.

Water: Low to moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Can naturalize.

Spacing: 12–15 ft or allow thicket formation.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 12–20 ft. Forms colonies via suckers.

Wildlife Value: Critical early nectar and fruit for wildlife.

Notes: Great for naturalizing, hedgerows, and wildlife. Can spread — plant where thickets are desired.

Nut Trees

Long-term nut producers and wildlife trees. Many have deep taproots — handle carefully when planting bare root.

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, apples, and some other plants nearby. Good for open areas and timber/wildlife plantings.

Chestnut

Castanea spp. (Chinese or hybrid)

Blight-resistant Chinese or hybrid chestnuts preferred. Produces sweet nuts and makes a handsome shade tree.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, acidic to neutral soils. Avoid poorly drained sites.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Needs a pollinator (plant two different cultivars).

Spacing: 30–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 30–50 ft tall. Begins bearing in 5–7 years under good conditions.

Wildlife Value: Nuts highly valued by wildlife and people.

Notes: Choose blight-resistant stock. Excellent dual-purpose tree for nuts and shade.

Hazelnut

Corylus americana (or hybrids)

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. Provides cover.

Notes: Native and productive. Good for edible hedgerows. Can spread by suckers. Cross-pollination improves yield.

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.

Pecan

Carya illinoensis

Large native nut tree. Northern-adapted cultivars recommended for reliable cropping in Middle TN.

Site & Soil: Deep, moist but well-drained soils. Needs room and good fertility.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high when young.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Choose northern cultivars for our climate.

Spacing: 40–50+ ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 70–100+ ft possible. Slow to begin heavy bearing.

Wildlife Value: Nuts important for wildlife and people.

Notes: Needs long hot summers. Select cultivars proven in Zone 7 for best results.

Shade Trees

Large-canopy trees for cooling shade, property value, and long-term landscape structure.

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.

Ginkgo Biloba

Ginkgo biloba

Ancient, extremely tough urban tree with unique fan-shaped leaves and brilliant yellow fall color.

Site & Soil: Adaptable; prefers well-drained soils. Excellent urban tolerance.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low to moderate once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Plant male cultivars to avoid messy fruit.

Spacing: 30–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Slow to moderate. 40–70 ft tall. Extremely long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Limited direct wildlife value but excellent specimen.

Notes: One of the toughest trees available. Choose male clones for landscapes.

Amur Maple

Acer ginnala

Smaller maple ideal for under power lines or smaller yards. Outstanding red fall color.

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils including clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Easy to establish.

Spacing: 15–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–20 ft tall. Multi-stem or single trunk.

Wildlife Value: Seeds provide some food for birds.

Notes: Excellent small specimen or informal screen. Very cold-hardy.

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.

Silver Maple

Acer saccharinum

Very fast-growing maple for quick shade. Best on larger properties away from structures and sewers.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils; very adaptable.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high.

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

Spacing: 40–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Very fast. 50–70+ ft. Weaker wood; can be brittle in storms.

Wildlife Value: Seeds important for wildlife.

Notes: Use where rapid shade is needed and space is abundant. Not ideal near houses or pavement.

Sugar Maple

Acer saccharum

Classic maple with superior fall color and potential for maple syrup. Prefers cooler, well-drained sites.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, slightly acidic to neutral soils. Avoid compacted or very hot urban sites.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate; consistent moisture preferred.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall planting ideal. Mulch to keep roots cool.

Spacing: 30–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 40–60+ ft tall. Long-lived.

Wildlife Value: Seeds and buds used by wildlife.

Notes: Best fall color in cooler microclimates. Avoid reflecting pavement and extreme heat stress.

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.

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. Can show chlorosis on high-pH soils.

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.

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: Excellent shade and timber tree. One of the faster-growing oaks.

Water Oak

Quercus nigra

Fast-growing oak suited to bottomland and moist sites. Good for wetter landscapes.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils; tolerates periodic flooding and clay.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

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

Wildlife Value: Acorns for wildlife.

Notes: Useful for lower, wetter ground where many oaks struggle.

White Oak

Quercus alba

The classic long-lived native oak. Majestic form and high wildlife value.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, deep soils. Prefers slightly acidic.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall planting preferred. Protect from deer when young.

Spacing: 40–60+ ft apart.

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

Wildlife Value: Acorns among the most important wildlife foods.

Notes: King of the oaks. Best as a long-term specimen on larger properties.

Willow Oak

Quercus phellos

Fine-textured oak with graceful form. Excellent street or lawn tree on acidic soils.

Site & Soil: Moist, acidic preferred. Tolerates clay if drainage is adequate.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 40–60 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Acorns for wildlife.

Notes: Fine leaves give a softer texture than most oaks. Watch for chlorosis on high-pH soils.

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.

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 — give it room.

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.

Notes: Best in cooler or higher elevation sites in Middle TN. Beautiful movement and fall color.

Sweet Gum

Liquidambar styraciflua

Native tree with outstanding fall color (red, orange, purple). Distinctive spiky fruit.

Site & Soil: Moist, acidic preferred. Tolerates clay and occasional wetness.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate to high when young.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 30–50 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 50–70 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Seeds eaten by birds; provides cover.

Notes: Excellent fall color. “Gumballs” can be a litter issue near walkways and patios.

Sycamore

Platanus occidentalis

Massive native river-bottom tree with striking peeling bark. Needs space and moisture.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils; excellent for creek banks and low areas.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: High; tolerates flooding.

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

Spacing: 40–60+ ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 70–100+ ft possible. Very large at maturity.

Wildlife Value: Habitat and seeds for wildlife.

Notes: Best on large properties or stream corridors. Aggressive roots and large size require room.

Black Willow

Salix nigra

Native riparian tree excellent for stream banks, wet areas, and rapid stabilization.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist soils. Tolerates flooding and heavy clay.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: High.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Easy to root and establish in wet ground.

Spacing: 20–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 30–50 ft tall. Relatively short-lived.

Wildlife Value: Important for stream ecology and wildlife.

Notes: One of the best native trees for creek restoration and wet spots.

Weeping Willow

Salix babylonica (and hybrids)

Graceful weeping form classic near water. Aggressive roots — site carefully.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils. Avoid dry upland sites.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: High.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring.

Spacing: 30–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 30–50 ft tall with broad weeping canopy.

Wildlife Value: Provides cover and some food.

Notes: Keep well away from septic systems, foundations, and drain lines. Best near ponds or wet areas.

Conifers

Evergreen and deciduous conifers for screens, wet sites, and year-round structure.

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. Forms “knees” in saturated soils.

Loblolly Pine

Pinus taeda

Fast southern pine excellent for large screens, windbreaks, or reforestation.

Site & Soil: Acidic, well-drained to moist soils. Tolerates clay better than many pines.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Easy to establish.

Spacing: 15–25 ft for screens; wider for specimens.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 50–80+ ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Cover and seeds for wildlife.

Notes: One of the fastest and most reliable pines for Middle TN.

Virginia Pine

Pinus virginiana

Tough native pine for difficult, dry, or poor soils. Useful in naturalized plantings.

Site & Soil: Poor, dry, acidic soils OK. Very adaptable.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 20–40 ft tall. Often irregular form.

Wildlife Value: Cover and seeds for wildlife.

Notes: Good for tough sites and naturalizing. Not a formal specimen pine.

Ornamental Trees

Flowering and specimen trees that provide seasonal interest, pollinator support, and beauty at a smaller scale.

Constellation Dogwood

Cornus × '*Constellation*' (or similar hybrid)

White-bracted hybrid dogwood with improved disease resistance over native flowering dogwood.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic soils.

Sun: Part shade preferred; morning sun OK.

Water: Moderate; consistent moisture.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Mulch and protect from drought.

Spacing: 15–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–20 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; fruit for birds.

Notes: Better resistance to anthracnose and drought stress than pure *Cornus florida*.

Coral Red Dogwood

Cornus spp. (red-stem or red-bract forms)

Selection offering red stems and/or bracts for multi-season interest.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils.

Sun: Part shade to full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 15–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–20 ft.

Wildlife Value: Good winter stem color and spring flowers.

Notes: Excellent for winter interest when stems are colored.

Greensleeves Dogwood

Cornus kousa or hybrid '*Greensleeves*'-type

Attractive foliage form of dogwood with good garden performance.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic soils.

Sun: Part shade.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Protect from hot afternoon sun.

Spacing: 15–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–20 ft.

Wildlife Value: Ornamental foliage and flowers.

Notes: Best with some afternoon shade in Middle TN heat.

Milky Way Dogwood

Cornus kousa '*Milky Way*'

Abundant white flowers on a Kousa-type dogwood with good resistance and later bloom time.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils.

Sun: Part shade to filtered sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 15–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–20+ ft.

Wildlife Value: Heavy flower display; fruit for birds.

Notes: Blooms later than native dogwood, often avoiding late frosts.

Pink Kousa Dogwood

Cornus kousa (pink forms)

Pink-bracted Kousa dogwood. Blooms later than native dogwood.

Site & Soil: Well-drained, slightly acidic soils.

Sun: Part shade to full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–25 ft.

Wildlife Value: Attractive pink display and fall color.

Notes: Later bloom helps avoid frost damage to flowers.

Red Twig Dogwood

Cornus sericea / *alba*

Shrubby dogwood prized for brilliant red stems in winter. Best color on young wood.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils. Excellent for rain gardens.

Sun: Full sun to part shade.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Rejuvenation prune for best stem color.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 6–10 ft tall. Multi-stemmed.

Wildlife Value: Cover and some fruit for wildlife.

Notes: Cut oldest stems to the ground every few years to keep stem color vivid.

Silky Dogwood

Cornus amomum

Native shrub-dogwood for wet edges and wildlife plantings.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet; native to stream edges.

Sun: Full sun to part shade.

Water: High.

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

Spacing: 6–12 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 6–12 ft.

Wildlife Value: Fruit and cover for wildlife.

Notes: Great native for rain gardens, pond edges, and naturalizing.

White Dogwood

Cornus florida

Native flowering dogwood. Classic spring white bracts and red fall fruit.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic soils. Avoid hot dry sites.

Sun: Part shade preferred.

Water: Moderate; consistent moisture critical.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall preferred. Mulch and never let dry out the first two summers.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–25 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Fruit important for many bird species.

Notes: Protect from drought and afternoon scorch. Watch for anthracnose; hybrids often more resistant.

Southern Magnolia

Magnolia grandiflora

Evergreen magnolia with large glossy leaves and fragrant white summer flowers.

Site & Soil: Moist, acidic, well-drained soils. Consistent moisture important.

Sun: Full sun to light shade.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Plant slightly high. Mulch well.

Spacing: 25–40 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 30–50+ ft tall. Evergreen.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; seeds for wildlife.

Notes: Needs room. Lower limbs can be left to the ground for a full skirted look.

Sweet Bay Magnolia

Magnolia virginiana

Semi-evergreen magnolia excellent for wet sites and smaller spaces. Fragrant white flowers.

Site & Soil: Moist to wet, acidic soils. Tolerates flooding.

Sun: Full sun to part shade.

Water: High.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Excellent for rain gardens and low spots.

Spacing: 15–25 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 15–25 ft (larger in ideal sites).

Wildlife Value: Flowers and seeds for wildlife.

Notes: More cold-hardy and smaller than Southern Magnolia. Great for wetter landscapes.

Mimosa

Albizia julibrissin

Fast-growing tree with ferny foliage and pink powder-puff summer flowers.

Site & Soil: Adaptable; drought-tolerant once established.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Low to moderate.

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

Spacing: 20–30 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. 20–30 ft tall. Relatively short-lived.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract hummingbirds and bees.

Notes: Can reseed; monitor for unwanted seedlings. Beautiful but not for formal long-term landscapes.

Red Crepe Myrtle

Lagerstroemia indica (red cultivars)

Long summer bloom in shades of red. Excellent heat and humidity tolerance.

Site & Soil: Well-drained soils. Very adaptable.

Sun: Full sun (required for best flowering).

Water: Low to moderate once established.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Avoid heavy pruning (“crape murder”).

Spacing: 10–20 ft depending on cultivar.

Mature Size / Growth: Fast. Size varies widely by cultivar (8–20+ ft).

Wildlife Value: Flowers highly attractive to pollinators.

Notes: Choose cultivar for desired size. Prune lightly in late winter only if needed for shape.

Redbud

Cercis canadensis

Native understory or lawn tree with early magenta-pink flowers on bare branches.

Site & Soil: Adaptable; well-drained preferred. Tolerates clay.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring. Easy to establish.

Spacing: 20–30 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 20–30 ft tall. Often multi-stemmed.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar for pollinators.

Notes: One of the best native small trees for Middle TN. Beautiful spring display.

Witch Hazel

Hamamelis virginiana (or hybrids)

Native shrub or small tree with fragrant winter or early-spring ribbon-like flowers.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic soils.

Sun: Part shade to full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 12–20 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 12–20 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar source; good understory plant.

Notes: Excellent for naturalized edges and winter interest. Fragrant blooms are a highlight.

Shrubs & Hedges

Versatile shrubs for borders, hedges, wet areas, wildlife, and multi-season interest.

Button Bush

Cephalanthus occidentalis

Native shrub with unique spherical white flower heads. Outstanding for wet sites and rain gardens.

Site & Soil: Wet to moist; tolerates flooding and heavy clay.

Sun: Full sun to part shade.

Water: High.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Perfect for low spots.

Spacing: 6–12 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 6–12 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Flowers highly attractive to butterflies and bees; seeds for waterfowl.

Notes: One of the best native shrubs for wet areas and pollinator gardens.

Carolina Allspice

Calycanthus floridus

Native understory shrub with fragrant maroon flowers in spring. Excellent for shade gardens.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained, fertile soils.

Sun: Part shade to full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or early spring.

Spacing: 6–9 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 6–9 ft tall.

Wildlife Value: Fragrant flowers; limited but useful wildlife value.

Notes: Wonderful fragrance. Great native for woodland edges and shade.

Deciduous Holly

Ilex decidua / *verticillata* types

Native winterberry-type holly with bright red berries that persist into winter (female plants).

Site & Soil: Moist to wet soils. Tolerates clay.

Sun: Full sun to light shade.

Water: Moderate to high.

Planting (Bare Root): Fall or spring. Plant male nearby for berry production.

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart.

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.

Elderberry

Sambucus canadensis

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

Site & Soil: Wet to moist soils. Tolerates heavy clay and poor drainage.

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

Water: High.

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

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

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

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

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

Forsythia

Forsythia × intermedia

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

Site & Soil: Adaptable to many soils.

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. Blooms very early spring.

Wildlife Value: Early nectar for pollinators. Provides cover.

Notes: Reliable and tough. Prune after flowering for best shape and denser growth.

Lucy Althea Hibiscus

Hibiscus syriacus 'Lucy' (or similar)

Rose-of-Sharon type with large, showy summer flowers. Heat-tolerant and easy.

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils. Adaptable.

Sun: Full sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall. Easy to establish.

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate-fast. 6–10 ft tall. Long summer bloom.

Wildlife Value: Flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

Notes: Reliable summer color. Can be pruned in late winter to control size.

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.

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

Spacing: 3–6 ft apart for dense hedge.

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

Wildlife Value: Provides cover and some food for birds.

Notes: Excellent fast hedge but can self-seed. Use responsibly and shear regularly.

Red Hibiscus

Hibiscus spp. (hardy red forms)

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.

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. Long summer bloom period.

Wildlife Value: Flowers highly attractive to hummingbirds and pollinators.

Notes: Showy and easy. 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 and wildlife.

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

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

Water: Moderate to high.

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

Spacing: 6–10 ft apart.

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

Wildlife Value: Early nectar; berries for birds; host plant for spicebush swallowtail.

Notes: Native and excellent for shade. Aromatic leaves. High wildlife value.

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 tough. Tolerates drought.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Water: Low once established.

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

Spacing: 8–15 ft apart. Spreads by suckers.

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

Wildlife Value: Fruit clusters provide winter food for birds.

Notes: Native and very tough. Great for poor soils, slopes, and naturalizing. Plant where spreading is acceptable.

Viburnum

Viburnum spp. (native cultivars preferred)

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

Site & Soil: Moist, well-drained soils. Most tolerate clay if not waterlogged.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade depending on cultivar.

Water: Moderate.

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).

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; berries for birds.

Notes: Highly recommended. Choose cultivars suited to your site. Many have multi-season interest.

Weigela – Pink

Weigela florida (pink cultivars)

Spring-blooming shrub with tubular pink flowers that attract hummingbirds. Easy and reliable.

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

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

Water: Moderate.

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

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. Reblooming cultivars available.

Weigela – Red

Weigela florida (red cultivars)

Deep red tubular flowers on an easy, reliable spring-blooming shrub.

Site & Soil: Adaptable, well-drained preferred.

Sun: Full sun for best color and bloom.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall.

Spacing: 4–8 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 4–8 ft.

Wildlife Value: Excellent hummingbird plant.

Notes: Same easy culture as pink forms. Striking flower color.

Weigela – Variegated

Weigela florida (variegated cultivars)

Cream- or gold-edged foliage provides season-long interest plus spring flowers.

Site & Soil: Well-drained soils.

Sun: Full sun to light shade. Variegation best with some sun.

Water: Moderate.

Planting (Bare Root): Spring or fall.

Spacing: 4–6 ft apart.

Mature Size / Growth: Moderate. 4–6 ft.

Wildlife Value: Flowers for pollinators; foliage interest all season.

Notes: Adds bright foliage color to mixed borders and foundations.

All information is tailored for bare-root stock and Middle Tennessee conditions (Zones 6b–7b). Fall planting is often ideal. Water deeply during establishment. Local soil tests and microclimate can further refine success. For site-specific advice, ask us at a pop-up or reach out directly.

Happy planting — thank you for growing with Trace Creek Trees & Shrubs.

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