

Special Bulletin  
Soils XXII/500  
June 17, 1965

THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
Department of Soils and Climatology  
New Haven, Connecticut

SOME NATIVE WOODY SHRUBS - ON GROWING THEM AS  
ORNAMENTALS

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An abundance of shrubs of many species occur naturally in the "open space" of Connecticut. During the past hundred years, many of the species were early invaders in a succession of species on abandoned farm lands and were more abundant than they are now. But, as trees became more dominant on these erstwhile fields, the shrubs decreased in abundance under the increasing shade and competition of the trees. Also most became less vigorous in the maturing woodlands, and this is reflected in their sparser foliage, fewer flowers and straggly appearance. The many species have, however, managed to survive this competition throughout time. Also, they have survived the hazards of insect, disease and weather whereas many introduced shrubs require protection to survive.

Some of these native shrubs are restricted to bogs or swamps, some to drier sites, and some occur over a wide range of soil conditions. Many are abundant only where clearing by man or weather removed shade and competition.

To learn more of the growth habits of the shrubs when they are free of the shade and competition of the woodland and when they are in a site or soil different from where they grow naturally, small plants of some forty-five species have been transplanted from their normal habitat to an open field. Their ability to survive and their growth habits under these conditions are being observed.

Some may be ornamental, especially in the suburban forest and lawn where they may fit the natural vegetation more tastefully than some exotic species. Less susceptibility to damage by insects, disease and weather may also be important attributes. Some should provide food and home for desirable wild life. And some may help subdue tree growth along roadsides and under utility lines.

Four specimens of each of the several species are being grown in an open, formerly plowed field on the Lockwood Farm of this Station at Mt. Carmel. Visitors may see them there. The maintenance consists of mowing the grass and of light fertilizing in the spring. The 2 soils in this area are Cheshire fine sandy loam and Watchaug loam. The Watchaug soil comprises about 2/3 of the area; it is a moderately well drained soil. The Cheshire soil is well drained. Both soils are formed from a reddish brown Triassic sandstone. Collection of these shrubs was started in the spring of 1960.

The species collected to date are listed alphabetically by scientific names. Important features of each are also given. The height given is the maximum which some but not all attain.

1. *Acer pensylvanicum*. Striped Maple or Moosewood. Small, shrubby tree to 35 feet tall. Bark has light vertical stripes. Large leaves. Bright yellow fall color.

2. *Acer spicatum*. Mountain Maple. Bushy tree or more often a shrub that grows to 30 feet tall. Yellow and scarlet fall color.
3. *Amelanchier canadensis*. Shadbush, Shadblow, Serviceberry or Juneberry. Usually several stems to 25 feet tall. White flowers in late April or early May.
4. *Aronia melanocarpa*. Black Chokeberry. To 6 feet tall. Clusters of white flowers in May. Black, berried fruit.
5. *Ceanothus americanus*. Jersey Tea. To 3 feet tall. White flowers in mid-June.
6. *Cephalanthus occidentalis*. Buttonbush. To 6 feet tall. Unique white, globular flowers July to September. Grows on very wet sites.
7. *Chamaedaphne calyculata*. Leatherleaf. To 3 feet tall. Evergreen. Forms large beds at edge of swamps or in boggy meadows. White bell-shaped flowers in April.
8. *Clethra alnifolia*. Summersweet or Sweet Pepperbush. To 8 feet tall. Fragrant white flower (narrow spike) in late July. Dark foliage.
9. *Comptonia peregrina*. Sweetfern. To 4 feet tall. Fragrant fern-like leaves. Thrives in infertile soils.
10. *Cornus amomun*. Silky Dogwood. To 10 feet tall. Creamy-white flower clusters in late June. Red twigs. Dull purple to deep red fall color.
11. *Cornus alternifolia*. Pagoda Dogwood or Alternate-Leaf Dogwood. Small tree to 20 feet tall. Pale yellow flower clusters in May. Stem and twigs green.
12. <sup>or</sup> *Cornus racemosa*. Gray Dogwood or Panicle Dogwood. To 10 feet tall. Creamy-white flowers in June. White, berried fruit on red stalks. Sprouts freely from base to form large, dome-shaped clumps.
13. *Cornus rugosa*. Roundleaf Dogwood. To 10 feet tall. White flower clusters in June. Tree-like with green branches. Leaves large and roundish. Dull yellow fall color.
14. *Cornus stolonifera*. Red-osier Dogwood. To 6 feet tall. Creamy-white flower clusters in June. Produces suckers freely.
15. *Diervilla lonicera*. Bush Honeysuckle. To 4 feet tall. Yellow flowers in June.
16. *Dirca palustris*. Leatherwood. To 6 feet tall. Yellow-green foliage. Twigs yellowish-green. Pliable stems.
17. *Hamamelis virginiana*. Witch-Hazel. To 15 feet tall usually in clumps. Yellow flowers in fall after falling of leaves. Gold and orange fall color.
18. *Ilex verticillata*. Winterberry or Black Alder. To 10 feet tall. Non-evergreen holly. Clusters of bright scarlet berries persisting into winter.
19. *Juniperus communis*. Common Juniper. To 15 feet tall. Evergreen shrub with needles. Blue-green color.

20. *Kalmia angustifolia*. Lambkill or Sheep Laurel. To 2 feet tall. Deep pink flowers smaller than mountain laurel in mid-June. Small, evergreen leaf. Spindly plant.
21. *Kalmia latifolia*. Mountain Laurel. To 12 feet tall. Flower of this evergreen is the state flower of Connecticut. Profuse blooming in mid-June.
22. *Kalmia polifolia*. Bog Laurel. To 1 foot tall. Flowers varying white to purple in May, smaller than mountain laurel. Leaves narrow and needle-like. Occurs in bogs and swamps.
23. *Ledum groenlandicum*. Labrador Tea. To 3 feet. Evergreen. Leaves rust colored and wooly on underside. Clusters of white flowers in May. Grows in bogs and swamps.
24. *Lindera benzoin*. Spicebush. To 12 feet tall. Leaves, fruit and bark aromatic. Small yellow flowers in mid-April. Red berries. Bright yellow fall color.
25. *Lonicera canadensis*. American Fly Honeysuckle. To 5 feet tall. Greenish-yellow flowers in late April. Red berries in pairs.
26. *Lonicera oblongifolia*. Swamp Fly Honeysuckle. To 5 feet tall. Creamy-yellow flowers in May. Crimson or purplish fruit.
27. *Lyonia ligustrina*. He-Huckleberry or Maleberry. To 10 feet tall. Resembles huckleberry. Cluster of white flowers in June. Bronze fall color.
28. *Myrica pensylvanica*. Bayberry. to 5 feet tall. Good, dark green foliage. Gray berries in fall. Grows in poor soil.
29. *Nemopanthus mucronata*. Mountain Holly. To 10 feet tall. Greenish-gray or ashen-gray bark. Bright red berries.
30. *Potentilla fruticosa*. Shrubby Cinquefoil. To 3 feet tall. Yellow flowers June to September. Native of boggy places but also grows on drier sites.
31. *Rhododendron nudiflorum*. Pinxterbloom or Wild Honeysuckle. To 8 feet tall. Showy, pink flowers in late May.
32. *Rhododendron viscosum*. Swamp Azalea. To 8 feet tall. Fragrant, white flowers in early July. Foliage color varies from dark green to blue-green.
33. *Rhus copallina*. Flameleaf Sumac or Shining Sumac. To 15 feet tall. Glossy foliage. Red fall color. Showy clusters of red fruit.
34. *Rhus glabra*. Smooth Sumac. To 15 feet tall. Red fall color. Showy clusters of red fruit.
35. *Sambucus canadensis*. American Elder. To 10 feet tall. Large, flat clusters of white flowers in June and July. Blue-black berries.
36. <sup>e</sup>*Spiraea latifolia*. Meadowsweet Spiraea. To 5 feet tall. White, spike-like flower in late June. Coarse plant.
37. *Staphylea trifolia*. Bladdernut. To 15 feet tall. Clusters of white, bell-shaped flowers in May. Inflated, three-lobed fruit.

38. *Taxus canadensis*. Canada Yew. To 5 feet tall. Low, straggling evergreen in moist woodland. Needles brown if not shaded during winter.
39. *Vaccinium corymbosum*. Highbush Blueberry. To 10 feet tall. White, bell-shaped flowers in May. Fruit blue with a bloom. Foliage scarlet and orange in fall. <sup>x</sup>
40. *Viburnum acerifolium*. Mapleleaf Viburnum. To 6 feet tall. Flat clusters of white or pink flowers in June. Purple fall color.
41. *Viburnum alnifolium*. Hobblebush or Witch-Hobble. To 8 feet tall. Showy, large clusters of white flowers in early May. Large, almost round leaves. Deep red fall color.
42. *Viburnum cassinoides*. Witherod or Wild-Raisin. To 12 feet tall. Creamy-white flower clusters in June. Glossy leaf. Fruit color green to red and then black as it ripens. Fall color purple turning to orange and red.
43. *Viburnum dentatum*. Arrowwood. To 12 feet tall. Clusters of white flowers in June. Fall color purple and red.
44. *Viburnum lentago*. Nannyberry. To 25 feet tall. Clusters of white flowers May to June. Glossy foliage.
45. *Viburnum trilobum*. American Cranberry bush. To 12 feet. Clusters of white flowers in June. Clusters of persistent, bright red berries. Leaves bronze, purple and dull red in fall.

Most of the shrubs were in nursery rows until the spring of 1964 when they were transplanted to the present location, which allows sufficient space for development into mature plants. Some have suffered from the transplanting followed by the drought of 1964-65. Even so, the following have grown well and developed good form - *Amelanchier canadensis*, *Aronia melanocarpa*, *Ceanothus americanus*, *Cornus amomun*, *Cornus racemosa*, *Cornus rugosa*, *Dirca palustris*, *Hamamelis virginiana*, *Ilex verticillata*, *Lonicera canadensis*, *Lonicera oblongifolia*, *Myric pensylvanica*, *Nemopanthus mucronata*, *Rhus glabra*, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, *Viburnum acerifolium*, *Viburnum cassinoides*, <sup>and</sup> *Viburnum trilobum*.

Those which have responded fairly well are *Acer pensylvanicum*, *Clethra alnifolia*, *Comptonia peregrina*, *Kalmia angustifolia*, *Kalmia latifolia*, *Lindera benzoin*, *Rhus copallina*, *Staphylea trifolia* and *Viburnum alnifolium*. The *Rhododendrons* have done poorly.

Many of those which have grown poorly since transplanting in 1964 will likely respond to more favorable moisture. Some, such as the *Rhododendrons* and *Viburnum trilobum*, may require mulching. The remainder have been acquired only recently and their response to the new habitat is yet to be determined.

It is gratefully acknowledged that permission to collect these shrubs for this purpose was granted by the Connecticut Park and Forest Commission, the New Haven Water Company, the White Memorial Foundation, and others.