



TREE NEWS

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YOU CAN USE

SPRING FLOWERING TREES FOR TENNESSEE

The right species selection helps mitigate stressors like pollution, heat, noise, and compacted soils while enhancing biodiversity and providing aesthetic, social, and economic benefits. Key factors to consider when choosing the right tree for the right site include climate adaptability, soil conditions, space availability, pest and disease resistance, cultural importance, maintenance needs, and the tree's impact on infrastructure and surrounding ecosystems.

When making a planting plan for new trees you should always think 'Right Tree in the Right Place' and have a watering, pruning, and maintenance cycle in place. Proper selection can support goals such as stormwater management, air quality improvement, and climate resilience.

Here is a list of spring flowering trees to consider for adding beauty and value to your site:

Tree Species	Species and/or cultivars of interest	Useful Notes - shade tolerance, bloom time, env benefits, height
Buckeye (<i>Aesculus spp.</i>)	Red (<i>A. pavia</i>) and Bottlebrush (<i>A. pavaefolia</i>) buckeye are commonly available at native nurseries as straight species but there are some cultivars.	Native. Red is earlier blooming than the white bottlebrush. Large shrubs to small trees (15-20' tall). Moist sites with some shade to help avoid leaf scorch.
Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier spp.</i>)	<i>A. arborea</i> is known as downy serviceberry and can be 15' up to a 40' tall tree. <i>A. canadensis</i> is the slightly smaller shadblow serviceberry.	Native trees with spring white blooms and summer fruit that birds (and people) enjoy. Fairly adaptable but could be sensitive to drought and compaction.
Redbud (<i>Cercis spp.</i>)	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> (eastern redbud) has cultivars with purple leaves ('Forest Pansy'), variegated leaves ('Flamethrower', 'Rising Sun', 'Silver Cloud'), weeping/contorted forms ('Ruby Falls', 'Lavender Twist'), white blooms ('Alba'), and red blooms ('Appalachian Red'). <i>C. canadensis</i> var. <i>texensis</i> has glossier leaves and the non-native <i>C. chinensis</i> ('Don Egolf') is more shrub-like.	Classic native that is adaptable to various pH and soil conditions but can decline from drought or root damage. Also sensitive to common lawn herbicides. Transplanting during the dormant season is suggested. Can be up to 30' tall x 35' wide with <i>C. canadensis</i> var. <i>texensis</i> and <i>C. chinensis</i> having smaller forms.
Fringetree (<i>Chionanthus spp.</i>)	<i>C. virginicus</i> is the native fringetree. <i>C. retusus</i> is called Chinese fringetree.	Large shrub to small tree (up to 20' or so tall) that is fairly adaptable in terms of soil pH and type and thrives in sun or part shade. Can be at risk from Emerald Ash Borer.

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Dogwood (<i>Cornus spp.</i>)	<i>C. florida</i> is the native dogwood. The UT-bred Appalachian series including 'Appalachian Blush' and 'Appalachian Spring', and 'Appalachian Joy' as well as the Cherokee series for a color range and resistance to Anthracnose and/or powdery mildew. <i>C. kousa</i> species has white flowered ('China Girl') as well as pink ('Satomi') and variegated leaf forms ('Wolf Eyes', 'Summer Fun').	<i>C. florida</i> is a classic native tree but is prone to stress and disease issues. Plant in a slightly acidic and moist soil with partial shade and select cultivars resistant to Anthracnose and powdery mildew. <i>C. kousa</i> is a non-native that can be a bit more adaptable (20-30'tall) in the landscape than <i>C. florida</i> . Bracts appear after leaves and after bracts of <i>C. florida</i> . Resistant to Anthracnose.
Silverbell (<i>Halesia spp.</i>)	<i>H. carolina</i> called Carolina silverbell 'Arnold Pink', 'Rosea', smaller 'Wedding Bells' and 'Meehanii', weeping 'Lady Catherine'. <i>H. diptera</i> is called two-wing silverbell.	This native species prefers soils that are moist, well-drained and slightly acidic. Can be challenging to transplant, and on average grow to about 30-40' but can get taller.
Star Magnolia (<i>Magnolia stellata</i>)	Cultivars with blooms across the white to pink spectrum. 'Centennial' is a large, white flowered tree. 'Royal Star' and 'Waterlily' are also common. There are also <i>M. stellata</i> x <i>M. liliiflora</i> hybrids that are later blooming (Ann, Betty, Jane, Susan).	Blooms over 2-3 weeks earlier in spring than saucer magnolias. Adaptable in climate and soils. Size is 20' or more tall x 15' wide. Non-native. Later flowering cultivars may evade spring frosts.
Saucer Magnolia (<i>M. x soulangeana</i>)	Saucer Magnolia cultivars come in a range of light to dark pink. 'Rustic Rubra' has large, fragrant flower. 'Lennei' is a darker pink, 'Lilliputian' is a more compact tree, and 'Ballerina' is later flowering.	Saucer is a hybrid of <i>M. denudata</i> and <i>M. liliiflora</i> very common in trade (20-40' tall). Avoid placement near structures with southern exposure. Select later flowering cultivars to avoid spring frost damage. Non-native.
Crabapple (<i>Malus spp.</i>)	Many crabapple species and hybrids are on the market. 'Dolgo', 'Liset', 'Prairie Rose', 'Prairie Maid', 'Sugar Tyme', 'Sargent' reported to be more resistant to common diseases.	Typically adapted to zones 4-7/8, so more common in cooler regions of the state. Select for resistance to rusts and other diseases. Crabapple is native but there are several species and hybrids represented in trade.
Flowering cherry (<i>Prunus spp.</i>)	<i>P. serrulata</i> — Japanese flowering cherry ('Kwanzan') pink, double blooms 'Okame' — <i>Prunus</i> hybrid, vase shape when younger, temp tolerant <i>P. x yedoensis</i> Yoshino — known for Washington DC fame; more rounded shape; white, impressive but short duration.	Flowering cherries are prone to many diseases, insects, and other issues. For best success, avoid planting too deep. Height varies due to grafting and use of weeping forms. There are native cherries, but the most common ornamental flowering selections are non-native.



Dogwood



Redbud



Flowering cherry

<https://utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/SP513.pdf>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Dirr's Encyclopedia of Trees and Shrubs

<https://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/ID-217/ID-217.html>



Redbud



Silverbell

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