

Flowering Trees of the Eastern Shore

Flowering trees can offer more than just flowers to a landscape. They should be included in an overall plan, not just stuck here and there as we see a particular species we like. Repetition of flowering trees can be used to tie an overall landscape together. In addition to dramatic flower displays, many species can add other visual interests, including fall leaf color, bark color and texture, branch growth characteristics, as well as provide an intermediate plant size between large shade trees and shrubs.

The following list of flowering trees is by no means complete. I have tried to include the best of the more common species, also some that are not used as often as they should be, as well as a few that should no longer be used.

Red Hone Chestnut - *X Aesculus carnea*

10" tall clusters of red flowers - coarse foliage - susceptible to scorch - dramatic in bloom - dirty tree (always dropping something - twigs, flowers, fruits, stems). May bloom.

Mimosa - *Albizia julibrissin*

Very popular in Sussex - most have died as a result of a soilborne fungus - resistant variety may be available. Summer flower.

Serviceberry - *Amelanchier*

White flowers in May, large red to black berries that ripen in July. Attractive to birds, good fall color, handsome gray bark. Shadblow. Insect and disease problems - mites, scale, fire blight.

Eastern Redbud - *Cercis canadensis*

White Redbud - *Cercis canadensis* - alba

Chinese Redbud - *Cercis chinensis*

Blooms the same time as dogwoods, blooms before leaves come out. Does well in sun or shade. White available - May bloom.

Fringe tree - *Chionanthus virginicus*

White feathery flower panicles. Full sun or partial shade. Female plants produce purple clusters of grape-like fruits, but a male plant is required for pollination. June bloom.

American Yellowwood - *Cladrastis lutea* (Leguminosae)

Beautiful white fragrant wisteria-like clusters of flowers in June. Outstanding ornamental tree with little insect or disease problems. Even gypsy moth avoids this one. Blooms heavily on

alternate years. Full sun and prune only in the summer. The heart wood and bark was used by early settlers to produce a yellow dye. Good fall color turning a bright yellow to orange.

Dogwoods - *Cornus* - This genus contains at least 45 species, which are available commercially.

Cornus florida - Native dogwood of the eastern United States. Subject to many insect and disease problems. It is still one of the most beautiful flowering trees. Prolific white bloomer in May, followed by bright red berries, beautiful fall color. Pink - Red.

Cornus kousa - Kousa dogwood or Japanese dogwood
Blooms later than native dogwoods. The large white bracts of the Kousa have 4 points unlike the 5 bracts of the native dogwood which are rounded and notched. This tree does not suffer the insect and disease problems that plague the native dogwood. The fruit of the Japanese dogwood looks like large red raspberries in the fall.

[Cornus mas](#) - Cornelian Cherry

A strikingly different member of the *Cornus* genus. Small shrub-like tree with small yellow flowers in early April. Produces edible yellow or scarlet fruit in August and September. Very few insect or disease problems.

[Cotinus coggygria](#) - Smoke Tree

Smoke-like masses of flowers appear in mid-June. Very striking, especially the purple leaf variety. Very wind and drought tolerant.

Purple Smoke Tree - *Cotinus* 'Velvet Cloak'

Hawthorns - *Crataegus* - Over 500 species. May-June bloom.

English Washington Winter King

Used a great deal by landscapers, but they require a great deal of maintenance. They are susceptible to Juniper rust, leaf spots, Lace bugs, mites, leaf miners, scale, tent caterpillars, borers, etc. Before using this tree in the landscape, consider carefully.

Franklinia - *F. alatamaha*

Single branch or multi-stem tree. Camellia-type flower - blooms in September-October. Discovered in Georgia in 1700's and disappeared from wild. Named for Ben Franklin Prefers alkaline soil.

Carolina Silverbell - *Halesia carolina*

White bell-shaped flowers produced in May followed by winged seed pods.

Golden Rain Tree - *Koelreuteria paniculata*

Large yellow panicles of bloom in July-August, which produce large clusters of green Chinese lantern-like pods. Withstands heat, wind and drought well.

Golden Chain Tree - *Laburnum*

Yellow wisteria-like flowers in May; needs full sun; very popular in Europe; should be used more; relatively short-lived.

Magnolias

Many, many species and varieties worthy of a place in the landscape.

- *Magnolia stellata* - Star Magnolia
Early bloom - April
- *Magnolia virginiana* - Sweet Bay or Swamp Bay
Native to the Eastern Shore. Prefers low, wet areas; does not like dry situations. White flowers appear off and on throughout the summer. Very fragrant lemon scent. Leaves can be used as a flavoring for meat and the bark was once used for the treatment of rheumatism and malaria.

Crab Apples - *Malus*

A crab apple is any apple tree that produces fruit of less than 2" in diameter. Crab apples are subject to the same insect and disease pests that attack regular apple trees. The good news is that many of the newer varieties are highly resistant to many of these pests. May bloom.

Sourwood or Sorrel Tree - *Oxydendrum arboreum*

Beautiful native flowering tree. Slow growing, few disease or insect problems. Flowers in July with small bell shaped fragrant white flowers that resemble lily of the valley. Beautiful red fall color. A superior addition to any landscape. Prefers full sun, rarely needs pruning.

Kwanzan Cherry - *Prunus serrulata*

One of the best oriental cherries. Kwanzan flowers are double and a deep pink in color. Relatively pest free. Prefers full sun and grows in a nice vase shape form. May bloom.

Ornamental Pears - Bradford. Capital. Redspire. Aristocrat - *Pyrus calleryana*

Resistant to fire blight. Blooms early in the spring covering with a mass of white flowers. Good fall color. Excellent for street trees and small yards. Late April-early May.

Pagoda or Scholar tree - *Sophora japonica*

Creamy yellow flowers in July. This tree blooms when there are no other species blooming, has good foliage and provides nice shade.

European Mountain Ash - *Sorbus aucuparia*

Striking tree - not well adapted to our hot dry summers, in the southern part of Delaware.

Japanese Stewartia - *Stewartia pseuduo-camellia*

Single or multi stem growth - slow growing - camellia-like flowers produced in July. Korean Stewartia has larger flowers. Very attractive rust colored bark that peels off in large flakes. July bloom.

Crape-myrtle - *Lagerstroemia indica*

One of our most popular flowering plants that can be grown as single or multi-stem tree. Southern Delaware and Maryland is the end of its hardiness range. Blooms in late July-early August. Colors include red, pink, lavender and white.