



WOODY PLANTS WITH WINTER INTEREST

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The progression of seasons in the northern U.S. produces a wide array of ornamental features to cherish. Too often we design our landscapes to provide seasonal interest in spring, summer, or fall with little consideration for the long winter. Winter can also be interesting due to many plants having unique shapes or form, texture,

foliage, twig color, bark, or persistent fruit or cones. Many birds and small mammals rely on winter fruit for their survival. In addition, evergreens come in a variety of colors besides green such as blue, blue-green, silvery-blue, yellow, and purplish. They may also have unique form or texture. Due to space constraints, needle-leaved

evergreen trees and shrubs, including dwarf conifers, will be addressed in the next newsletter. Below is a list of deciduous and broad-leaved evergreen woody plants that are particularly ornamental in winter. With an appropriate design and careful plant selection, we can plant landscapes that are colorful year-round.

Deciduous Plants With Showy Bark or Twigs

Trees

Acer griseum: paperbark maple, showy, exfoliating, reddish-brown bark
Acer triflorum: three-flowered maple, showy, exfoliating, light tan to orange-brown bark
Acer pensylvanicum: moosewood, striped-bark maple, showy, smooth, striped green and white bark
Acer tegmentosum: Manchu striped-bark maple, showy, smooth, striped green and white bark
Acer 'White Tigress': White Tigress striped-bark maple, showy, smooth, striped green and white bark
Amelanchier x grandiflora: apple serviceberry, multi-stemmed, smooth, gray bark with darker gray stripes
Betula alleghaniensis: yellow birch, showy, yellow to dark gray to bronze, exfoliating bark
Betula nigra: river birch, showy, exfoliating, light tan to reddish-brown bark
Betula papyrifera: paper birch, canoe birch, showy, chalky-white, exfoliating bark
Betula populifolia 'Whitespire Senior': Whitespire Senior birch, showy, chalky-white bark with black patches
Carpinus betulus: European hornbeam, smooth, dark gray bark resembling muscles
Carpinus caroliniana: American hornbeam, musclewood, smooth, dark gray bark resembling muscles
Carya ovata: shagbark hickory, showy, gray, shaggy bark in long strips
Celtis occidentalis: common hackberry, corky, warty, raised ridged, muddy gray to tan bark
Cladrastis kentukea: yellowwood, showy, smooth, dark gray bark
Fagus grandifolia: American beech, smooth, gray bark
Fagus sylvatica: European beech, smooth, gray bark
Gymnocladus dioica: Kentucky coffeetree, stiff, raised, ash-gray, exfoliating bark
Heptacodium miconioides: seven-son flower, showy, grayish-brown, exfoliating bark with lighter inner bark
Magnolia x loebneri 'Merrill': Merrill magnolia, smooth, light gray bark, large, fuzzy buds
Magnolia stellata: star magnolia, smooth, light gray bark, large, fuzzy buds
Parrotia persica: Persian parrotia, gray, green, brown, and white exfoliating bark when older
Phellodendron amurense: Amur corktree, showy, grayish-brown, corky bark with age
Phellodendron lavalleyi 'Longenecker': Eyestopper® Lavale corktree, light brown, very corky bark with age
Platanus occidentalis: American sycamore, showy, exfoliating creamy-white to tan bark
Platanus x acerifolia: London planetree, showy, exfoliating, cream, green, and olive bark
Populus tremula 'Erecta': upright European aspen, smooth, greenish-white to cream bark, narrow, upright form
Populus tremuloides: quaking aspen, showy, greenish-white to cream, smooth bark
Prunus maackii: Amur chokecherry, showy, shiny, cinnamon to coppery-red, semi-exfoliating bark
Prunus sargentii: Sargent cherry, polished, reddish-gray to chestnut-brown bark
Salix 'Golden Curls': Golden Curls willow, curly, golden-yellow, pendulous branches
Salix matsudana 'Tortuosa': corkscrew willow, curly willow, olive-green, curly, pendulous branches
Salix 'Scarlet Curls': Scarlet Curls willow, curly, pendulous branches that turn reddish in winter
Salix x sepulcralis var. *chrysocoma*: golden weeping willow, golden, pendulous, slender branches

Stewartia pseudocamellia: Japanese stewartia, showy, exfoliating, mottled bark with white, beige, and dark brown patches
Syringa reticulata: Japanese tree lilac, reddish-brown, shiny bark
Syringa pekinensis 'Morton': China Snow® Pekin lilac, showy, exfoliating, reddish-brown, shiny bark
Ulmus parvifolia: lacebark elm, Chinese elm, showy, exfoliating to mottled bark with gray, green, orange, and brown patches

Shrubs

Cornus alba: Tatarian dogwood, deep red stems in winter
Cornus sanguinea 'Winter Flame' or 'Midwinter Fire' (same plant): bloodtwig dogwood, yellow stems at base gradually change to orange then red to pink at tips
Cornus stolonifera: redtwig or redosier dogwood, bright to dark red stems, also available in coral and yellow
Corylus avellana 'Contorta': Harry Lauder's walkingstick, corkscrew hazelnut, twisted, contorted twigs
Euonymus alatus: winged euonymus, burning bush, corky, winged stems
Hydrangea quercifolia: oakleaf hydrangea, dried flowers, cinnamon-brown, exfoliating bark
Hypericum kalmianum: Kalm St. Johnswort, older stems are reddish-brown and exfoliating
Kerria japonica: Japanese kerria, bright green stems
Physocarpus opulifolius: eastern ninebark, exfoliating, cinnamon-brown, shiny bark
Prunus tomentosa: Manchu cherry, Nanking cherry, shiny, reddish-brown, exfoliating bark
Salix alba 'Britzensis': coral bark willow, showy, young, bright coral to red twigs
Salix udensis 'Sekka': Japanese fantail willow, twisted branches that are flattened at the ends, reddish-purple stems
Vaccinium corymbosum: highbush blueberry, reddish twigs in winter

Woody Plants With Interesting Form or Texture

Trees

Acer palmatum var. *atropurpureum*: purpleleaf Japanese maple, smooth gray bark, fine textured branches
Cercidiphyllum japonicum 'Pendula': weeping katsuratree, graceful, weeping form
Cornus alternifolia: pagoda dogwood, distinctly tiered, horizontal branches
Corylus columa: Turkish filbert, Turkish hazelnut, long catkins, light tan, flaky to ridged bark, pyramidal form
Metasequoia glyptostroboides: dawn redwood, nice pyramidal form, showy, reddish-brown, fibrous bark, buttressed at base of tree
Nyssa sylvatica: black gum, tupelo, nice, pyramidal form with tiered, horizontal branches
Quercus imbricaria: shingle oak, pyramidal form when young, brown leaves hold late into winter
Quercus palustris: pin oak, brown leaves hold on late into winter, nice, pyramidal form with horizontal branches
Taxodium distichum: baldcypress, nice, pyramidal form, showy, reddish-brown to gray, fibrous bark, buttressed at base of tree
Ulmus americana: American elm, large, vase-shaped form

Woody Plants With Showy, Persistent Fruit

Trees

Crataegus phaenopyrum: Washington hawthorn, showy, glossy, orange-red fruit
Crataegus viridis 'Winter King': Winter King hawthorn, showy, bright scarlet to orange-red fruit
Euonymus bunganus: winterberry euonymus, pink capsules with orange arils persist to early winter
Malus spp.: flowering crabapple, some cultivars have showy, persistent, yellow, orange, red, or purple fruit
Sorbus alnifolia: Korean mountainash, showy, pinkish-red to scarlet fruit to early winter

Shrubs

Aronia arbutifolia: red chokeberry, dark red berries through early winter
Berberis thunbergii: Japanese barberry, thorny stems with small, bright red fruit, invasive
Cotoneaster apiculatus: cranberry cotoneaster, cranberry-red, small fruit persists to early winter, arching form
Ilex verticillata: winterberry, Michigan holly, bright red, orange, or yellow fruit on stems of female plants
Hippophae rhamnoides: sea-buckthorn, bright orange fruit on female plants
Myrica pensylvanica: northern bayberry, blue-gray, waxy, small, aromatic fruit on female plants, holds aromatic leaves late into early winter
Pyracantha coccinea: bright orange-red fruit in clusters, holds leaves late into early winter
Rhus glabra: smooth sumac, terminal, red turning black, fruit clusters on female plants
Rhus typhina: staghorn sumac, terminal, fuzzy, red turning black fruit clusters on female plants, hairy stems
Rosa spp.: many hybrids and some species have persistent orange to red hips
Rosa virginiana: Virginia rose, purple stems in winter, red hips turn black
Viburnum opulus: European cranberrybush viburnum, shiny, bright red fruit, invasive
Viburnum sargentii: Sargent viburnum, orange-red fruit
Viburnum trilobum: American cranberrybush viburnum, shiny, bright red fruit

Woody Plants That Flower in Late Winter

Hamamelis vernalis: vernal witchhazel, late winter, reddish-yellow, fragrant flowers in early March

Vines

Celastrus scandens: American bittersweet, showy, yellow-orange to orange fruit with bright red seeds
Hydrangea petiolaris: climbing hydrangea, showy, exfoliating, cinnamon-brown bark

Broadleaved Evergreen Plants with Interesting Winter Foliage, Form or Fruit

Shrubs

Buxus spp.: boxwood, Green Series are most hardy ('Green Mound,' 'Green Gem,' etc.), small, dark green leaves, deer resistant
Ilex x meserveae: blue holly, Meserve holly, dark green, glossy leaves, female plants have red fruit
Mahonia aquifolium: Oregon grapeholly, dark green, glossy, spiny leaves turn purplish in winter, purple, grape-like fruit
Paxistima canbyi: canby Paxistima, dark green leaves, fine texture
Rhododendron 'P.J.M.': P.J.M. rhododendron, dark purple leaves in winter, many other small-leaved cultivars also have purple leaves in winter
Yucca filamentosa: Adam's needle yucca, blue-green, sword-like, spiky foliage
Yucca filifera 'Bright Edge': Bright Edge yucca, variegated leaves with yellow margins and green centers
Yucca filifera 'Colour Guard': variegated leaves with creamy-yellow central stripe with green margins that turn rose during cold weather

Groundcovers

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi: bearberry, kinnikinnick, dark green leaves turn bronzy-red in winter
Euonymus fortunei 'Coloratus': purpleleaf wintercreeper, dark green leaves turn maroon to purplish in winter, numerous variegated leaf cultivars are available
Gaultheria procumbens: wintergreen, glossy, dark green, aromatic leaves turn reddish in late fall, red berries
Mahonia repens: creeping mahonia, dark green, glossy, spiny leaves turn purplish in winter
Pachysandra terminalis: Japanese pachysandra, light green leaves
Vinca minor: Vinca, myrtle, periwinkle, dark green, glossy leaves, keep out of natural areas