Amelanchier - Serviceberry  (Rosaceae)

Amelanchier is a four-season group of shrubs or small trees of great ornamental value for spring flowers, summer fruits and foliage, autumn color, winter bark and bud character, and zigzag twigs.

FEATURES

Form
-deciduous woody plants, encompassing several species that are often difficult to distinguish among each other
-variable size from medium to large shrubs or small to medium trees (depending upon species, hybrids, and cultivars)
-size range from 6-30’ tall x 4-10’ wide among the various species
-upright oval to upright clump growth habit
-slow to medium growth rate

Culture
-full sun to full shade (partial shade is best, as it is often a woodland edge or understory tree)
-prefers moist, well-drained, acid soils but will tolerate alkaline soils
-propagation primarily by seeds or rooted stem cuttings
-no serious disease or pest problems for this genus
-abundant availability for several species, hybrids, and cultivars, usually in B&B or container form

Foliage
-alternate, emerging pubescent gray-green and becoming glabrous medium green
-elliptical to oval and finely serrated
-casts a dappled light shade
-autumn color ranging from yellow to orange to red in Oct., often spectacular

Twigs
-brown-red twigs often zigzag, especially in the slower-growing sections of the shrub or tree
-lateral and terminal buds are of equal size
-tan pointed buds are conical, red-brown, and opening with silky hairs in Mar.
-branches are a smooth light-gray and often have dark longitudinal striations

Trunk
-usually multi-trunked
-light gray and smooth, with some forms darkly striated

USAGE

Function
-specimen, focal point, foundation, entranceway, border, naturalization, or wildlife attraction shrub or tree, or street tree if single-trunked

Texture
-fine in foliage and when bare
-open density in foliage but average to thick when bare

Assets
-excellent four-season plant (spring flowers, summer fruit-foliage-texture, autumn color, winter bark-buds-texture)
-adaptable to a wide range of soil and light conditions

Liabilities
-slow growth

Habitat
-as a general rule, zones 4 to 8 for the genus, but some species are cold tolerant to zone 2 and other species are warm adaptable to zone 9
-the various species are native to regions of the U.S. and Canada

SELECTIONS

Alternates
-shrubs or small trees with specific ornamental traits in a given season, or for multi-season accents (Cornus florida, Cornus kousa, Malus cultivars, etc.)
-slow growing ornamental woody shrubs or small trees

Cultivars - Variants - Related species
There are various species of Amelanchier available in the trade. Some of the taxonomic designations are questionable.
-Amelanchier alnifolia - Saskatoon Serviceberry - large maroon fruits, 15’ x 10’
-Amelanchier canadensis - Shadblow Serviceberry - and Amelanchier arborea - Downy Serviceberry - the standard clump (multi-trunked) forms, 15’ x 10’, 'Tradition' has a single trunk for a 25’ x 15’ stately specimen or street tree
-Amelanchier x grandiflora - Apple Serviceberry - hybrid of Downy and Allegheny Serviceberries, with 'Autumn Brilliance' having profuse flowering and brilliant red autumn foliage, 20’ x 15’
-Amelanchier laevis - Allegheny Serviceberry - tallest multi-trunked and most prominently striated of the Serviceberries, 30’ x 15’
-Amelanchier stolonifera - Running Serviceberry - a thick 6’ x 4’ clump of upright stems, it may be used as an unpruned barrier hedge in row plantings or at wet sites

Amelanchier is also known by other common names: Juneberry, Shadblow, Shadbush, or Sarvis Tree.