Yarmouth Tree Advisory Committee
Tree Selection Guide
(Updated 11.16.2026)

Selecting a tree or shrub represents a commitment, as these are long-lived and sometimes very large plants when mature. We therefore recommend trees that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife by providing flowers, fruit or seeds, and structure for a home. Because of their resilience, native trees are particularly helpful to ensure a future with cleaner air and water and, as noted, one with more abundant and diverse wildlife.

Including diverse species and those native to Maine and indeed the continental US helps mitigate loss to pests, diseases, and even climate change.

It is not possible to predict or completely avoid pest problems even with native species, but reading about the tree of interest can help shape your decision. If a problem arises, learning what you are dealing with can enable timely action. The State of Maine has a great resource to help with identification and management of pests and diseases.

Some of the trees on this list are more southern. The Tree Advisory Committee supports the theory of "Assisted Migration", moving threatened species to more northerly locations to prevent gene pool loss due to the warming climate.

Defining "Native"

Trees native to Maine and New England are listed as Native. Trees not specifically native to Maine are specified by an asterisk (*).

Trees native to North America more broadly are listed as North American Native.

Imported species are not included for reasons noted above.

To help choose the most appropriate species for a particular site, trees are grouped by height. The link at each entry provides detailed information including pictures. Note that this is not an exhaustive list; peruse the helpful information and links noted in the references.

You may consult the Tree Advisory Committee or the Tree Warden for more information and advice on tree selection.

TALL TREES (50 to 85 feet)

Native

- Red Maple (Acer rubrum)
- Sugar Maple (Acer saccharum)
- Sweet Birch (Betula lenta)
- *Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis)
- Beech (Fagus grandifolia)
- *Honey Locust (Gleditsia triacanthos)
- Butternut (Juglans cinerea)
- Larch (Larix laricina)
- *Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua)
- White Spruce (Picea glauca)
- Black Spruce (Picea mariana)
- American Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis)
- Black Cherry (Prunus serotina)
- White Oak (Quercus alba)
- Swamp White Oak (Quercus bicolor)
- Red Oak (Quercus rubra)
- Pussywillow (Salix discolor)
- Black Willow (Salix nigra)
- White Cedar, also called Arborvitae (Thuja occidentalis)
- Basswood/American Linden (Tilia americana)
- American Elm (Ulmus americana)— Princeton and Morton varieties

North American Native

- Indian Bean Tree (Catalpa speciosa)
- Kentucky Coffee Tree (Gymnocladus dioicus)
- Cucumber Magnolia (Magnolia acuminata)
- Sweetbay Magnolia (Magnolia virginiana)
- Tulip Tree (Liriodendron tulipifera)

MEDIUM HEIGHT TREES (25 to 45 feet)

Native

- Striped Maple (Acer pensylvanicum)
- River Birch (Betula nigra)
- Gray Birch (Betula populifolia)
- Musclewood (Carpinus caroliniana)
- Pagoda Dogwood (Cornus alternifolia)
- Eastern Red Cedar (Juniperus virginiana)
- Black Tupelo (Nyssa sylvatica)
- Hophornbeam/Ironwood (Ostrya virginiana)
- Quaking Aspen (Populus tremuloides)
- Pin Cherry (Prunus pensylvanica)
- Sassafras (Sassafras albidum)
- Mountain Ash (Sorbus decora)

North American Native

- American Yellowwood (Cladrastis kentukea)

SMALL TREES (10 to 20 feet)

Native

- Speckled Alder (Alnus incana ssp.rugosa)
- Shadbush/Serviceberry (Amelanchier canadensis, A. laevis, A. arborea)
- Flowering Dogwood (Cornus florida)
- Cockspur Hawthorn (Crataegus crus-galli)
- Common Witchhazel (Hamamelis virginiana)
- Chokecherry (Prunus virginiana)
- American Crabapple, Sweet Crab (Malus coronaria)

North American Native

- Redbud (Cercis canadensis)

SHRUBS (Native)

*Red Chokeberry (Aronia arbutifolia)
Black Chokeberry (Aronia melanocarpa)
American Hazelnut (Corylus americana)
Winterberry (Ilex verticillata)
Beach Plum (Prunus maritima)
Highbush Cranberry (Viburnum opulus)

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Native Plants of North America

Maine Audubon Plant Finder

Maine Department of Agriculture, Publication 2500, "Gardening to Conserve Maine's Native Landscape: Plants to Use and Plants to Avoid"

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Maine Yardscaping provides links to plant lists native to Maine including those that attract pollinators and an "Ask the Experts" link for answers to questions.

Wild Seed Project provides a selection of seeds for plants native to the Northeast.