



Digging in Dodge

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The Musclewood Tree

There is no question that landscapes are enhanced by the addition of trees. When selecting a new tree, choose something not already in the neighborhood. Increasing the diversity of trees decreases the likelihood of overall demise of the urban landscape in the event of a pest or disease outbreak.

Since 2002, the Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association (WNLA) annually selects excellent, but underused plants and trees to recommend to the public in home landscaping projects. The 2015 woody ornamental was the Musclewood tree, *Carpinus caroliniana*. "Musclewood is a tree that will grow beautifully in full sun, full shade, and everything in between. This small, attractive tree, growing to a height of 20 to 30 feet, gets its name from its muscular-looking branches and smooth bark. With moist, slightly alkaline soil, *Carpinus caroliniana* is tough enough for zone 2 right through zone 9. It is a versatile beauty."

This tree is buff and hardy with a trunk that looks like corded muscle as if it hits the gym regularly, hence the common name Musclewood tree. Because the wood does not have any flavor and does not crack or split, it has been used for tool handles, bowls, dishes, and support poles.



Musclewood has a single, uneven, often crooked trunk, and a broad, well rounded crown. The trunk will be only 24 inches in diameter at maturity with slate gray, bark that was

smooth when young, but developed roughness as it aged. The twigs and branches are brown to reddish-brown in color, narrow, crooked and smooth.

This native Wisconsin tree is a relatively small, slow-growing one; an understory tree in the hardwood forests. The leaves are a long oval with double serrated edges that turn orange-red in the fall. It is monoecious, producing separate male and female flowers on the same tree. The male flowers are not showy, but the females are an attractive reddish-green that give way to clusters of winged nutlets.

The Musclewood tree is an important link in the food chain. The nutlets are a food source for squirrels and fox. The leaves provide food for the larva of butterflies including tiger swallowtail, red-spotted purple, white admiral and striped-hairstreak. Seeds, buds, and catkins are eaten by grouse, pheasants, bobwhite, turkeys, ducks, and warblers.

Musclewood tree is a small, attractive tree that is a great overall addition to the home landscape, just what the garden "trainer" advises to get things in shape.



Carol Shirk
Certified Master Gardener



Upcoming Meetings

Anyone with an interest in gardening is welcome to attend the following free programs. Master Gardener meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings are at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau.

October 25—*Growing Microgreens is easy and fun* by Caryl Watterson, owner of BrynTeg Farm LLC of Ashippun/Oconomowoc, WI. In this hands-on workshop, Farmer Caryl will help you get your hands dirty learning about microgreens, a perfect green-thumb activity for the winter. In this workshop, you will learn to prepare your seeds, containers, and soil medium and to understand planting methods and watering techniques, and of course, you will take home your own container of microgreens. Farmer Caryl grew up helping grow her family's food on the family's dairy farm. She started her market-farm business in 2009, and began selling produce at local farmers' markets and through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), providing a box of produce directly to individuals and families on a weekly or biweekly basis. Today, the farm continues with CSA offerings, but its produce is also included in a local artisan grocery delivery service and is incorporated in the menus of several local farm-to-fork restaurants. Farmer Caryl enjoys and desires to teach the next generation about good food and farming practices. Putting action behind words, the farm actively participates in farm-to-school endeavors in coordination with Sprouting Together Inc., a local not-for-profit organization.

November and December—*No meetings. Happy Holidays!!*

January 24, 2019—*Project Year in Review* by Master Gardener Volunteers of projects participated in during 2018, complete with photos and discussion.

Master Gardener Websites

<http://www.wimastergardener.org/>

<https://wimga.org/>

<http://dodge.uwex.edu/master-gardener/>

Master Gardener E-mail

askamastergardener@att.net



Halloween Fun Facts: Scarecrows, a popular Halloween Fixture; symbolize the ancient agricultural roots of the holiday.

Native Trees & Shrubs as Host Plants

"Healthy bird communities are inextricably linked to healthy insect populations. Ninety-six percent of terrestrial North American birds raise their young on insects, primarily caterpillars which are rich in fat and protein" Audubon Magazine, July-August 2013

***Amelanchier* ssp.—Serviceberry, Juneberry**



Audubon.org

- * Fruit is highly attractive to up to 30 species of birds including Robins, cedar waxwings, cardinals, grosbeaks, ruffed grouse, turkey.
- * Caterpillar host plant to 105 species of butterflies and moths.

***Betula nigra*—River Birch**



- * Excellent food source for wildlife.
- * Flowers are a pollen source for at least 18 species of bees.
- * At least 32 species of birds eat seeds, buds, catkins, and insects attracted to the tree.
- * Seeds and flower buds are also food source for small mammals, grouse & turkey.
- * Insects hide in exfoliating bark during winter providing an essential food source for woodpeckers.
- * Caterpillar host plant to 358 species of butterflies and moths including Laurel Sphinx, Green Comma, Morning Cloak, and Red-spotted Admiral.

***Carya ovata*—Shagbark Hickory**



- * At least 22 species of birds eat the nuts and associated insects.
- * Brown creepers nest under exfoliating bark.
- * Caterpillar host plant to 186 species of butterflies and moths.
- * During the day, bats have been found to roost under the exfoliating bark of older trees.

***Cornus alterniflora*—Pagoda Dogwood *Cornus sericea*—Redosier Dogwood**



Audubon.org

- * Nectar and pollen source for a wide range of pollinators including long-tongued bees, short-tongued bees, wasps, flies, and butterflies.
- * Fruit is eaten by at least 34 species of birds including wood duck, goldfinch, yellow warbler.
- * Caterpillar host plant to 106 species of butterflies and moths.

***Juniperus virginiana*—Eastern Red Cedar**



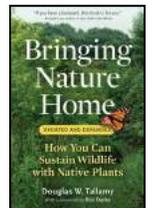
Audubon.org

- * At least 29 species of birds eat the fruit.
- * Exfoliating bark used by some birds as nesting material.
- * High quality bird shelter for nesting and roosting.
- * Deer "resistant".

David Garison Stevens, UW Madison Arboretum Curator, Native by Design: Gardening for a Sustainable Future Conference

To find more native trees and shrubs and the birds and butterflies they attract visit the National Wildlife Federation and Audubon websites.

Or pick up the book, *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglass Tallamy to learn more about the connection between native plants and native wildlife.



The National Wildlife Federation's website: <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder> will find the best native plants specifically for your area that attract butterflies and moths and the birds that feed on their caterpillars. By entering your zip code it will bring up the plants from the highest to lowest number of butterfly and moth species that use them as host plants for their caterpillar

The Audubon's link: <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants> searches the Audubon's native plants database and explores the best plants for birds in your area. Entering a zip code is all that is required to bring up a list of native plants and birds that they may attract for your location. .



The first Jack-O-Lanterns were actually made from turnips.

Plants Plus Series

It's not too early to think about continuing educational hours. The Plants Plus series on the Wisconsin Master Gardener website, <https://wimastergardener.org/plants-plus/> is a way to learn at your own pace by watching a pre-recorded lecture and reading the additional material included with the lecture. The Plants Plus series includes a remix of past training presentations, printed materials and other references focused on specific plants or gardening topics. You can pick and choose the topics that are of interest to you.

To receive MGV continuing education credit, watch the video, read the supporting materials, and complete the short quiz included with each group. It's that easy and can be done from the comfort of your own home.



Master Gardeners in Action



If you see a spider on Halloween, it is considered a good luck, as it means the spirit of a loved one is guarding you.

Fall Gardening Tips

Bulbs, Corms, Rhizomes & Tubers



Once you give up on repellent, scare tactics, and fencing you might want to try some of these more animal-resistant bulbs for your gardens: - Daffodils (*Narcissus*), Autumn crocus (*Colchicum*), hyacinth (*Hyacinthus*) ornamental onions (*Allium*), crown imperial (*Fritillaria*) grape hyacinth (*Muscari*) squills (*Scilla*), snowdrops (*Galanthus*) and winter aconite (*Eranthis*)

These bulbs are usually left undisturbed by animals, however in years of high animal populations and limited food, they will eat most anything.

Melinda Meyers

Month-By Month Gardening in Wisconsin

Trees and Shrubs

Fall is a great time to plant trees and shrubs. The new plants will have several months to grow new roots and will be ready to grow early next spring.

Trees that bleed or are susceptible to disease if pruned in the spring may be pruned now. This includes maples, birch, black walnut, oaks, honey locust and mountain ash. Prune young trees to a single central leader; remove broken, crossed or rubbing branches; and gradually remove lower branches. Always make proper pruning cuts just beyond the branch collar but not leaving stubs.

Continue watering trees, shrubs and evergreens until the ground is frozen. 4"-6" of woodchips, bark or other mulch spread under trees and shrubs will help hold moisture and reduce winter injury if we don't have insulating snow in mid-winter.

October Gardening Tips. <http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/octobergardeningtips.aspx>



Lawn Care

Apply a broadleaf herbicide to your lawn in October if you did not apply one in September and the weeds are still growing.

If you have removed clippings from your lawn all season, fertilize your lawn in early October using a controlled-release or slow-release formulation. For grass growing in the sun, use the label rate of the fertilizer that you have selected. For grass growing in the shade, apply half of the label rate.

Continue to mow in November until lawn goes dormant.

University of Extension-Wisconsin

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Garden Journaling

Once the explosion that is summer comes to a screeching halt, gardeners are susceptible to "garden fatigue." Ah, but fall is for reflection — on the successes and failures of the year's garden, on the "bones" of the landscape, on the cyclical nature of life. It is a time for slowing down, observing, writing snippets of poetry. It is the perfect time to start a garden journal.

Journaling may take various forms. One person's journal might be a recording of bloom times; another's might be filled with drawings and notes on vegetable varieties. Regardless of how you journal, you'll find that developing the habit of acute observation will bring surprising discoveries.

Pam Ruch

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