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Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

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Amelanchier laevis: Allegheny Serviceberry[1]

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Introduction

The Allegheny serviceberry grows in shade or partial shade as an understory tree. The small tree grows 30 to 40 feet tall and spreads 15 to 20 feet. Multiple stems are upright and highly branched forming a dense shrub, or if properly pruned a small tree. The tree is short-lived, has a rapid growth rate, and can be used as a filler plant or to attract birds. The main ornamental feature is the white flowers, borne in drooping clusters in mid-spring. The purplish-black berries are sweet and juicy but are soon eaten by birds. The fall color is yellow to red. It is well adapted for planting beneath power lines due to its small size.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Amelanchier laevis*: Allegheny Serviceberry
Credit: Ed Gilman

General Information

Scientific name: *Amelanchier laevis*

Pronunciation: am-meh-LANG-kee-er LEE-viss

Common name(s): Allegheny serviceberry

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5A through 8B (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: deck or patio; specimen; container or planter

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

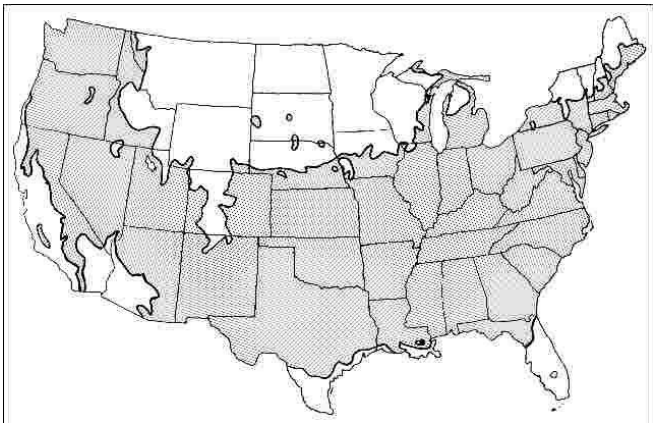


Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: upright/erect, vase

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval), ovate, oblong

Leaf venation: pinnate, reticulate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow, red

Fall characteristic: showy

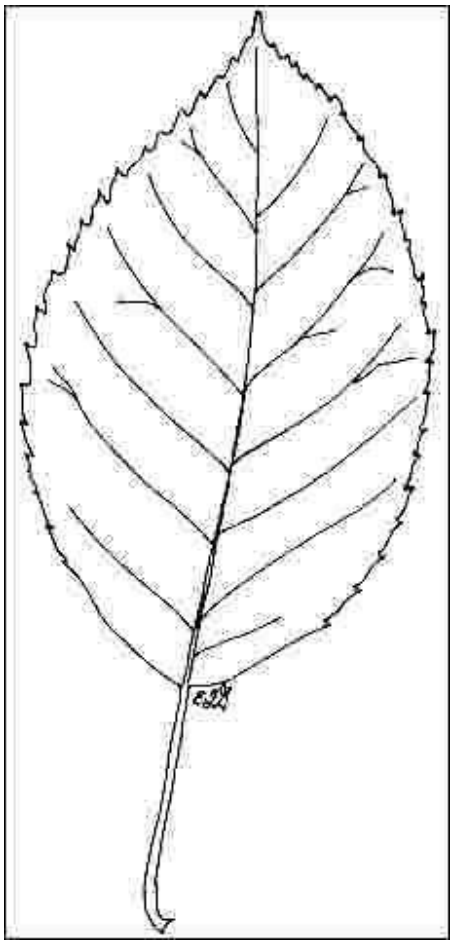


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: purple, black

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: reddish, brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: shade tolerant, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Pests

Cambium miners cause concern when noticed but are not very damaging to the tree. The mines can extend from a

twig all the way down to the roots. The mines form light-colored lines in the bark. No controls are suggested.

A leaf miner will mine leaves, particularly the lower half of the leaf. The mines are irregular in shape.

The leaves of amelanchier are skeletonized by at least two insects. The first insect forms small cocoons on the undersides of leaves. Skeletonized leaves look as though they have windows in them after the insects scrape tissue off the top and bottom of the leaves. The second insect is the larva of the pear sawfly. The larvae are black to greenish-black and look slimy. Adult sawflies lay eggs in May and June and again in August. Heavily skeletonized leaves drop off.

Several borers attack amelanchier. Healthy trees are considered less susceptible, so regular fertilization and watering during dry spells will help prevent borer attacks.

Spider mites will feed on amelanchier. These insects are hard to detect as they are so small. The main symptom of mite injury is the loss of green leaf coloration. If the infestation is heavy, very fine webbing may be seen. Horticultural oil sprays applied in the spring help control mite infestations.

Aphids of several types suck juices from amelanchier. Heavy infestations cause distortion of the foliage and new growth, and deposit large amounts of sticky honeydew on lower foliage. Black sooty mold will grow on the honeydew.

Diseases

Witches' broom, also called black mildew, infects the growing point causing the formation of many stems. The cluster of stems is called the "witches' broom". Another symptom is a black fungal growth, coating the undersides of the leaves. The damage to the tree is usually not serious and the brooms can be pruned off. No chemical controls are suggested.

Leaf blight can cause leaf drop when a severe infection occurs. The disease causes small purple spots on the leaves. The spots enlarge and turn brown, later a small black dot will be seen in the center of the spot. Large numbers of spots cause infected leaves to drop.

Fire blight is characterized by the sudden wilting and death of branch tips. The blossoms wilt, blacken, and hang on the twig. The bark is shriveled and has small bumps or blisters on it. Sometimes gum oozes out of the infected area and a crack forms between the diseased and healthy bark. Control with chemicals is difficult. Diseased branches should be pruned out. Make the cut at least four inches beyond the diseased area. Disinfect pruning tools with bleach between cuts. Fertilizing heavily with nitrogen increases susceptibility to fire blight.

Powdery mildews of several types cause white powdery growth on the leaves of amelanchier. Late in the season no controls may be needed.

Fruit rot be a problem in wet weather. The fruits are often eaten by birds so may not be around long enough to become diseased.

[1] This document is ENH234, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication. © UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/.*

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