Native Trees of Maryland
Trees and Faith

Meditation

Thanksgiving for trees:
Gratitude for all that trees bring to us. Let us start with our breath. "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:1-2)

This wind is known in Hebrew as “Ruach” or breath of God. When we breathe we breath in oxygen produced by plants and trees. BREATHE. Every moment of every day we are “breathed” and we breathe in life-giving oxygen. BREATHE. Let us take a moment in silent thanksgiving as we breathe in and out with gratitude what God has provided from trees.

Prayer for the Tree of Life

Creator of the Universe, you call us to be keepers and tenders of this Garden of the Earth, our common home. Among the trees in this Garden is the Tree of Life, with all its wondrous beauty, biodiversity, and intricate interdependence.

Creator of all life,
Inspire us with faith to answer a sacred call to preserve and defend the intricate web of life for all beings.
Guide us with wisdom as we seek ways to love our neighbor through our loving acts of restoration.
For present and future generations, may we be known as healing humans who live in balance and harmony with your whole Creation. Amen.
The Benefits of Planting Native

Planting trees has a number of benefits, including reduced stormwater runoff, improved air quality, shade and reduced urban heat island effect, expanded habitat for wildlife, and even improved property value. However, not all trees were created equal. Planting native tree species can be significantly more beneficial to the local ecosystem.

Conserving Water
Because native plants are adapted to local environmental conditions, they require far less water.

Wildlife
Many insects and birds are dependent on very specific native plant species. Native plants provide nectar for pollinators, protective shelter, and food for various types of wildlife.

Helping the Climate
Many native plants, especially long-living trees like oaks and maples, are effective at storing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide.

What are native plants?
Native plants are those that occur naturally in a region in which they evolved. They are the ecological basis upon which life depends, including birds, insects, mammals, and people. Without them and the species that co-evolved with them, local wildlife cannot survive.

*This pamphlet is not an exhaustive list of native trees in Maryland, but does provide some information on a few of the most popular species for plantings.
Evergreens

Evergreens provide year round cover in addition to winter shelter and nesting sites. Evergreens also provide sap, cones, seeds, needles, twigs and bud throughout the year, creating a continuous food source.

**American Holly** (*Ilex opaca*)

American hollies grow from 15-50 feet tall and produce red, fleshy berries that are available throughout the winter. At least 18 species of birds, including songbirds, Mourning Doves, wild turkeys and Northern Bobwhite Quails, are known to eat the fruit.

- Full sun or partial shade
- One male American holly should be planted for every three females to ensure production of berries on female trees
- Acidic, moist, well drained soil
- 40'-50'

**Eastern Red Cedar** (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Many birds and small mammals eat the berrylike cones of eastern red cedar, especially in winter. Wildlife species that eat eastern red cedar fruits include Cedar Waxwings, Bobwhite Quail, Ruffed Grouse, Ring-necked Pheasant, wild turkeys, rabbits, foxes, raccoons, skunks, opossums and coyotes.

- Full sun
- Eastern Red Cedar is resistant to extremes of drought, heat, and cold
- Dry or moist well-irrigated soil
- 40'-50'
Loblolly pines provide shelter and food for many animals, including birds such as Carolina chickadees, brown-headed nuthatches, rufous-sided towhees, northern bobwhites and wild turkeys. The seeds are also consumed by chipmunks, squirrels and other small rodents.

**Loblolly Pine** *(Pinus taeda)*

- **Full sun**
- **Well irrigated moist & rich soil**
- **60’-90’**
- Once established in a good location, pine trees needs almost no care at all

Squirrels, other small mammals, song birds, wild turkeys and Bobwhite Quail feed on sweetbay seeds. Deer browse sweetbay leaves and twigs throughout the year. Sweetbay leaves are also used in nest construction by several bird species.

**Sweetbay Magnolia** *(Magnolia virginiana)*

- **Full sun or partial shade**
- **Acidic medium moist to wet soil**
- **10’-20’**
- Plant Sweetbay Magnolia in narrow corridors or urban areas where you need a compact tree
Deciduous Trees

Although deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall and winter, they still provide cover and food for wildlife. Leaf litter from deciduous trees also provides food and cover for many invertebrate species.

American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)

American beech trees are one native deciduous tree which can tolerate shade. Planting this tree in a shady backyard will provide nuts for songbirds and squirrels, sap for Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and buds for finches.

- Full sun
- Acidic, moist, well drained soil
- 50'-70'

Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*)

The most common hickory species is the bitternut hickory. Songbirds such as grosbeaks, some woodpeckers, and other animals like fox, squirrels and chipmunks eat hickory nuts.

- Full sun or partial shade
- Rich, moist soil
- 50'-70'
**Red Maple** *(Acer rubrum)*

Maples have winged seeds which are eaten by various types of birds. Grosbeaks and American Goldfinches use the leaves for nesting material and also use the branches for supporting their nests. Maple sap is eaten by squirrels and songbirds.

- **Full sun**
- **Well-drained & moist soil**
- **40’-60’**

The Red Maple has the greatest north–south range of any tree species living entirely in the eastern forests.

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**Sassafras** *(Sassafras albidum)*

In the fall, sassafras trees are in beautiful color with orange leaves, blue fruits and green stems. Its blue fruits are a favorite of Gray Catbirds, American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds.

- **Full sun or partial shade**
- **Well drained, moist, and acidic soil**
- **30’-60’**

A sassafras tree can be kept as a single small- to medium-size tree or allowed to spread (by suckers) and mature into a shrubby colony.
**Tulip Poplar** *(Liriodendron tulipifera)*

Hummingbirds enjoy its nectar, while Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers enjoy its sap. Tulip poplars produce seeds, which are favorites of Northern Cardinals. Hollow spaces inside this tree provide homes for squirrels and raccoons, among other animals.

- **Full sun**
- **Deep, rich, well-drained & moist soil**
- **70’-90’**

The tulip poplar is a fast-growing, tall North American hardwood tree that can reach a height of over 150 feet!

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**White Oak** *(Quercus alba)*

There are five types of oaks native to Maryland: the black, white, scarlet, red and pin oaks. Many songbirds, ducks, and other animals eat the acorns. Deer eat oak leaves and twigs.

- **Full sun or partial shade**
- **Deep, moist, well-drained soil**
- **50’-80’**

The white oak is a large, strong, imposing specimen. It has a short stocky trunk with massive horizontal limbs.
Sources

Arbor Day Foundation

Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Creating a Wild Backyard - Native Maryland Trees

Audubon: Why Native Plants Matter

University of Texas as Austin Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

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