

GARDEN SPOT

Flowering trees brighten areas



MARTY FIGLEY

As our landscapes mature, they become more shady and the consideration of new plantings changes. Then, too, narrow lots with houses or buildings nearby are often shady areas that require plants that perform well there.

Consider trees. There are several small flowering trees that are ideal for these situations and add a note of brightness. Now, I'm not talking about heavy shade, but light shade, perhaps under tall trees. By the way, it's good practice to remove some of the lower branches on tall trees to allow enough light to reach the shorter ones.

Often these "second story" trees are found naturally near the edge of a woods. Some of them to consider are Serviceberry, Redbud, Flowering Dogwood and Mountain Ash.

There are several species and cultivars of each and before you make your selection, visit local nurseries and/or learn about them from a book. "Landscaping With Native Trees," Guy Sternberg and Jim Wilson (Chapters), is an excellent one. It includes a list of mail-

order sources, several in Michigan.

The folks at Ray Wiegand's Nursery, Macomb, (800) 955-3658; Alexander & Associates, Washington, (810) 286-1500; or Bordine Nursery Ltd., Rochester Hills, (810) 651-9000, or Clarkston, (810) 625-9100, may be able to help.

Varieties

Downy Serviceberry, *Amelanchier arborea*, and smooth serviceberry, *A. laevis*, are the most tree-like of the group. Others are more shrub-like.

Serviceberries bloom in the early spring with white, airy blossoms. In the summer they produce a sweet berry that birds love — so do people if they can beat the birds to them. The leaves turn color in the fall and winter interest is provided by the smooth, gray bark.

Redbuds, *Cercis canadensis*, remain relatively small, which makes them ideal in many gardens. The rose-pink blossoms in early spring are followed by heart-shaped leaves, which turn green after a brief flush of a reddish hue. You may be able to find a white-flowered redbud, *Cercis canadensis* var. *alba*, which would be a conversation piece.

In the winter, seed pods cling to the arching branches of these trees and add interest to the landscape.

Flowering Dogwood, *Cornus florida*, is probably the most popular of the flowering trees in our zone 5. It is difficult to choose from the many dogwoods available; some with white blossoms, others with pink or salmon. It is fascinating to watch the changes of the flowers during the period they are opening to their ultimate size.

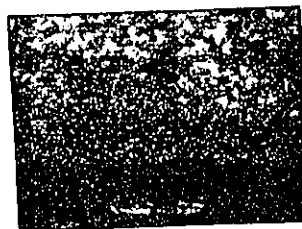
Clusters of bright red fruit enhance the rich red foliage in the fall and the winter scene is improved by the tree's silhouette. Little, softly pointed flower buds also add interest then.

Mountain Ash, *Sorbus americana*, likes acidic soils and slightly wet situations. Broad white cluster flowers develop on the ends of twigs in late spring after the foliage appears. The bright red fruits ripen in late summer and may stay through the winter unless birds eat them.

Golden fall leaf color makes this an outstanding beauty.

Cruise invitation

On a personal note: I encourage you to join me on a "Gardens of the River Cruise" aboard the Mississippi Queen steamboat, April 13-20, 1997. Jim Wilson, host of PBS-TV's "The Victory Garden," and Todd Steadman, editor of Garden Gate magazine, will lead talks



MARTY FIGLEY

At your service: Serviceberry trees make a cloud-like canopy.

and tours during this spring trip. We will sail from New Orleans and visit fabulous Southern gardens and antebellum plantations in Oak Alley, Baton Rouge, Natchez, Vicksburg, Helena and Memphis. On board, we will enjoy entertainment and scrumptious food in a most relaxing atmosphere.

Early April is an ideal time to leave this Northern weather and go South! Free air transportation if you book by Aug. 13. For information, call Chuck Randolph Travel & Tours at (810) 645-6050, or me at (810) 644-2178.

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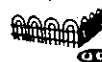


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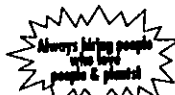
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