

# Troy University Arboretum Meadow Loop Nature Trail Guide

## 1. Southern Magnolia--*Magnolia grandiflora* Linnaeus

Southern Magnolia is a large native evergreen tree in the Magnolia family (Magnoliaceae). It is native to the Coastal Plain of Alabama, generally south of the Blackbelt region. Southern Magnolia is a popular ornamental that is readily available in nurseries. Many cultivars have been developed, including dwarf forms that remain under twenty feet in height. Southern Magnolia prefers an acidic, sandy soil that is rich in organic matter. Although very shade tolerant, the best shape and flowering occurs on plants grown in full sun.

## 2. Loblolly Pine--*Pinus taeda* Linnaeus

Loblolly pine is one of several pine species native to the southeastern United States. It ranges from eastern Texas to Florida, and north to southern New Jersey. The wood industry classifies the species as a southern yellow pine.

## 3. Pecan--*Carya illinoensis* (Wangenheim) K. Koch

Native to the Mississippi River Valley this large tree was spread widely by first the Native Americans and by Europeans who planted it for its large oily, sweet, thin-shelled nuts. It is the tallest growing of the hickories and the most important native nut tree of North America. It is cultivated extensively in the South and West. Thomas Jefferson planted seed at Monticello and gave some to George Washington whose pecan trees are now the oldest trees at Mount Vernon. Pecan wood is used for furniture, flooring, veneer and for smoking meat.

## 4. Groundsel Tree--*Baccharis halimifolia* Linnaeus

Groundsel Tree is an evergreen shrub in the Sunflower family (Asteraceae). It is native to coastal areas of Alabama, but has spread inland and now occurs almost statewide. The flowers produce an abundance of nectar and attract many insects. Groundsel Tree is occasionally used as a landscape plant, but its short life span and brittle wood limit its use. It is available from some nurseries, especially ones near the coast, or it can be grown from seed or cuttings. It requires full sun for best growth.

## 5. Northern White Oak--*Quercus alba* L.

White Oak is a large native deciduous tree in the Beech family (Fagaceae). It can be found throughout Alabama. White Oak occurs in a wide range of habitats from bottomland forests to dry ridges. The wood is dense, strong, and resistant to splintering. It has been used for furniture, flooring, handles, barrels, and for railroad cross ties. The USS Constitution was constructed utilizing white oak timber. White Oak acorns provide

food for more than 180 different kinds of birds and mammals. White Oak is often cultivated as a shade tree. Its large size limits use in small landscapes. White Oaks are somewhat slow growing, but may live for more than 600 years.

**6. Black Locust--*Robinia pseudoacacia* Linnaeus**

Black Locust is a native deciduous tree in the Bean family (Fabaceae). It is native to most of Alabama. Black Locust has been widely planted outside its native range and is considered a pest in some parts of the United States and other countries. It has very hard, rot resistant wood that has been used for fence posts, rails, barns, furniture, and flooring. It is also a very desirable firewood that burns at high temperatures with little smoke. Black Locust is also planted as a landscape tree. It is tolerant of drought and poor soils. Several cultivars are available including ones without spines, ones with pink flowers, and dwarf forms. It prefers full sun and a well-draining soil.

**7. China Berry--*Melia azedarach* Linnaeus**

China Berry is an introduced deciduous tree in the Mahogany family (Meliaceae). It is native to southern Asia and Australia. In Alabama it can be found nearly statewide. China Berry is toxic to livestock which occasionally browse it if more desirable foods are unavailable. The fruit are toxic to humans if consumed, but are eaten with no ill-effect by many birds. China Berry is listed as a Category 2 invasive species by the Alabama Invasive Plant Council.

**8. Water Oak--*Quercus nigra* Linnaeus**

One of the most common oaks in the South these trees reach their greatest size on moist sandy sites. Large old trees are also often seen one on each side of an old home serving as shade trees. However, because of their large size and the trouble in cleaning up the abundant small leaves and acorns in autumn these trees have lost favor in the last few years. Large crops of acorns are produced every two years. The small bitter acorns serve as an important food source for wildlife. Water oaks and other members of the red oak group often have extremely variable leaves. Notice the different shapes and numbers of lobes per leaf-even on the same tree or limb. This makes identification different.

**9. Callery or Bradford Pear--*Pyrus calleryana* Decaisne**

Callery Pear is an introduced deciduous tree in the Rose family (Rosaceae). It is native to China, Japan, and Vietnam. In Alabama it can be found statewide. Callery Pear is listed as a Category 2 invasive species by the Alabama Invasive Plant Council. A cultivated form known as "Bradford" is a common landscape plant. Common Pear (*Pyrus communis* Linnaeus) sometimes persists around old home sites. It has 3-5 styles and larger, usually green fruit without light colored spots. Some escaped individuals resembling the Bradford pear but with larger fruit appear to be of hybrid origin.

**10. Sweet Gum--*Liquidambar styraciflua* Linnaeus**

Native to eastern Northern America and to the mountains of Mexico and Guatemala this is one of the most important hardwoods for timber production, being second only to the oaks. A gum can be obtained by peeling the bark and scraping off the resin that forms. This resin has been used for chewing gum, medicinal purposes and as a base for the manufacture of soaps and adhesives. An adaptable and fast-growing tree, sweetgums are often the first hardwoods to invade sites such as old fields.

**11. Popcorn Tree-- *Triadica sebifera* (L.) Small**

A native of Japan and China this small tree was introduced for its colorful fall foliage and waxy popcorn-like fruit in winter. All parts of this plant contain a poisonous milky sap. Fast growing and adaptable this tree has spread widely. Birds spread the fruit and if a tree is cut down it sprouts vigorously from the roots. It is now a serious pest along the Gulf Coast.

**12. Honey Locust-- *Gleditsia triacanthos* Linnaeus**

The honey locust, also known as the thorny locust or thorny honeylocust, is a deciduous tree in the Bean family (Fabaceae). It is native to central North America where it is mostly found in the moist soil of river valleys.

**13. Glossy Privet-- *Ligustrum lucidum* W.T. Aiton**

Glossy Privet is a non-native evergreen large shrub or small tree in the Olive family (Oleaceae). It is native to China. In Alabama it is found throughout the state, but is most common in the southern two-thirds of Alabama. Glossy Privet is a larger plant and its leaves end in a sharp point. Those of Japanese Privet are rounded at the tip. Glossy Privet is listed as an invasive species by the Alabama Invasive Plant Council and other states.

**14. Carolina Laurel Cherry-- *Prunus caroliniana* Aiton**

Carolina Laurel Cherry is a native small tree in the Rose family (Rosaceae). It can be found throughout Alabama but is most common in the lower third of the state. The leaves of Carolina Cherry Laurel contain high amounts of hydrogen cyanide and are poisonous if consumed. Carolina Laurel Cherry is an attractive small tree that can be pruned into a hedge. It thrives in most soil types, is drought tolerant, and resistant to insect and deer damage. Plants are available from nurseries or can be grown from seed. It tends to be "weedy" and produced large amounts of fruit. It also re-sprouts vigorously if cut down.

**15. Terraces, succession**

This area of the arboretum was once cleared for pasture. The rolling mounds of soil still visible were terraces that helped prevent erosion. This area has slowly changed from an open grassy area into forested land. This change in the biological community over time is known as ecological succession.

**16. Muscadine-- *Muscadinia rotundifolia* (Michaux) Small**

Muscadine is a native perennial woody vine in the Grape family (Vitaceae). It occurs in Alabama. Muscadine occurs in floodplain forests along rivers, in upland woods, and along fence rows and forest edges. It is a high climbing woody vine climbing by unbranched tendrils. Scuppernong is a variety of Muscadine with greenish or bronze colored fruit. It was discovered along the Scuppernong River in Tyrell County, North Carolina. Both varieties are widely cultivated. Muscadine fruit are edible and are gathered by locals for jelly and wine or eaten fresh. They are also consumed by a variety of wildlife from birds to mammals.

**17. Chinese Privet-- *Ligustrum sinense* Loureiro**

Chinese Privet is an introduced, invasive shrub or small tree in the Olive family (Oleaceae). It is native to China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. In Alabama Chinese Privet can be found throughout the state. Chinese Privet is listed as one of the 10 worst invasive species in Alabama by the Alabama Invasive Plant Council. Once established, Chinese Privet spreads by abundant seed formation and by prolific suckering from the roots. Chinese Privet forms dense infestations that exclude native species, and can prevent the regeneration of forest trees. It can be controlled by fire, pulling of small plants, and by the use of herbicides.

**18. Kudzu-- *Pueraria montana* (Loureiro) Merrill**

Native to Japan, this woody vine was planted widely in the Southeast for hay and erosion control beginning in the 1920's. Now it is a major pest excluding other plants from millions of acres. This is a prime example of man moving an organism that is not a pest in its native range due to natural forces into a new area where those forces are not present. The result is the introduced organism undergoes an uncontrolled population explosion. Kudzu is a member of the bean family and has in association with its roots bacteria which can convert nitrogen in the air into a form usable by the plant as fertilizer. Kudzu also has an astounding growth rate of up to 1 foot per day under favorable conditions.

**19. Snags**

A snag refers to a standing, dead or dying tree, often missing a top or most of the smaller branches. Snags provide foraging and nesting sites for a variety of animals from woodpeckers, wood ducks, flying squirrels, raccoons, and butterflies.

**20. French Mulberry-- *Callicarpa americana* Linnaeus**

French Mulberry is a native deciduous shrub in the Mint family (Lamiaceae). French Mulberry occurs throughout Alabama. It can be found in pine woods, in forest openings, along forest edges, and in disturbed or cut-over woodlands. It is a multi-stemmed shrub reaching 15 feet in height. Human consumption of the fruit of French Mulberry is sporadic. Cases of upset stomach have been reported after people consumed the raw fruit. Others have experienced no ill effect.

**21. Black Highbush Blueberry-- *Vaccinium fuscatum* Aiton**

Black Highbush Blueberry is a native deciduous shrub in the Heath family (Ericaceae). It can be found throughout most of Alabama. Black Highbush Blueberry occurs in acidic, mesic to wet pine or mixed pine/hardwood forests, often on sandy soils. Black Highbush Blueberry is one parent of many of the cultivated varieties of blueberries.

**22. Southern Lady Fern-- *Athyrium asplenoides* (Michaux) A.A. Eaton**

Southern Lady Fern is a native herbaceous perennial in the Lady Fern family (Athyriaceae). It can be found throughout Alabama. Southern Lady Fern prefers a rich, moist soil in full to partial shade. It is an easy to grow hardy fern that can be used in a shaded garden, around the foundation of a wall in a shady location, or around a water feature. It can also be used in shaded areas along streams or ponds.

**23. Common Wax Myrtle-- *Morella cerifera* (Linnaeus) Small**

Common Wax Myrtle is a native evergreen shrub or small tree in the Bayberry family (Myricaceae). It is found throughout Alabama, but is most common in the southern portion of the state. The fruit is an important source of food for many bird species. The drupes were once collected and placed in boiling water to remove the wax to make soap and bayberry candles. Common Wax Myrtle is widely available in the nursery trade. It is often used as a screen around air conditioning units, retention ponds, and other unsightly areas. When plants become leggy, they can be cut back to ground level to encourage dense sprouting. It is also valuable for regeneration of strip mine sites because it produces root nodules associated with a symbiotic actinomycete that are capable of atmospheric nitrogen fixation at a rate higher than that of legumes.

**24. Swamp Black Gum-- *Nyssa biflora* Walter**

Swamp Tupelo is a native deciduous tree in the Sour Gum family (Nyssaceae). It is native to most of Alabama. Swamp Tupelo fruit are consumed by a wide variety of wildlife including black bears, raccoons, wood ducks, and song birds. The wood is dense with an interlocking grain making it difficult to split. It is used for pulp, inexpensive furniture, pallets, flooring, and gunstocks.

**25. Shortleaf Pine-- *Pinus echinata* Miller**

Shortleaf Pine is a native evergreen needle-leaved tree in the Pine family (Pinaceae). It can be found throughout Alabama. Shortleaf Pine occurs in sandhills, in rocky woods, in old fields, and in other dry upland habitats. Shortleaf Pine is an important commercial species for timber and pulp production. It has the unusual ability for a Pine species of being able to sprout from the base when young if the top is damaged or killed. Trees growing on poorly draining soils are subject to root rot. Shortleaf Pine is occasionally sold as a landscape tree. It grows best on well-draining sandy soils in full sun.

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