

# Priority Tree & Tall Shrub Species for Planting, Replacement & Reforestation in Northern NJ

(Morris, Passaic, Bergen, Sussex,  
Warren, Essex, Hudson)

**Trees in Bold  
are highest  
priority to  
plant**

## UPLANDS

### or ROCKY SLOPES

White oak - *Quercus alba*  
Chestnut oak - *Quercus montana*  
Pignut hickory - *Carya glabra*<sup>St</sup>  
Mockernut hickory - *Carya tomentosa*  
Shagbark hickory - *Carya ovata*<sup>St</sup>  
Red hickory - *Carya ovalis*<sup>St</sup>  
Bitternut hickory - *Carya cordiformis*<sup>St</sup>  
White pine - *Pinus strobus*<sup>E, F</sup>  
Pitch pine - *Pinus rigida*<sup>E, F</sup>  
Black birch - *Betula lenta*<sup>AS</sup>  
Sugar maple - *Acer saccharum*<sup>AS</sup>  
Basswood - *Tilia americana*<sup>St</sup>  
Black cherry - *Prunus serotina*<sup>St</sup>  
Sassafras - *Sassafras albidum*<sup>F</sup>  
Bigtooth Aspen - *Populus grandidentata*<sup>F</sup>  
Common Hackberry - *Celtis occidentalis*<sup>St</sup>  
Downy serviceberry - *Amelanchier arborea*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
Allegheny serviceberry - *Amelanchier laevis*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
Hop hornbeam - *Ostrya virginiana*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
Flowering dogwood - *Cornus florida*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
Witch hazel - *Hamamelis virginiana*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
Chokecherry - *Prunus virginiana*  
Winged Sumac - *Rhus copallinum*<sup>F</sup>  
Blackhaw viburnum - *Viburnum prunifolium*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
American hazelnut - *Corylus americana*<sup>S, AS</sup>

**Trees  
from  
← either list →  
can be planted  
in sites with  
moist soil,  
not too  
wet or dry**

## VALLEYS

### or LOWLANDS

White oak - *Quercus alba*  
Swamp white oak - *Quercus bicolor*<sup>St</sup>  
Shagbark hickory - *Carya ovata*<sup>St</sup>  
Bitternut hickory - *Carya cordiformis*<sup>St</sup>  
Black gum - *Nyssa sylvatica*<sup>St</sup>  
Grey birch - *Betula populifolia*<sup>St, F</sup>  
Yellow birch - *Betula alleghaniensis*<sup>AS</sup>  
Sugar maple - *Acer saccharum*<sup>AS</sup>  
Red maple - *Acer rubrum*<sup>St</sup>  
American elm - *Ulmus americana*  
Slippery elm - *Ulmus rubra*  
Basswood - *Tilia americana*<sup>St</sup>  
Sycamore - *Platanus occidentalis*<sup>St</sup>  
Tulip tree - *Liriodendron tulipifera*<sup>St</sup>  
Serviceberry - *Amelanchier canadensis*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
Pagoda dogwood - *Cornus alternifolia*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
American hornbeam - *Carpinus caroliniana*<sup>U, AS</sup>  
Black elderberry - *Sambucus nigra*<sup>S</sup>  
Highbush blueberry - *Vaccinium corymbosum*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
Winterberry holly - *Ilex verticillata*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
Grey Dogwood - *Cornus racemosa*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
Red-osier Dogwood - *Cornus sericea*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
Silky Dogwood - *Cornus amomum*<sup>S, AS</sup>  
Pussy Willow - *Salix discolor*<sup>S, F</sup>  
Nannyberry - *Viburnum lentago*<sup>S, AS</sup>

## KEY

E = Evergreen  
F = Full Sun  
AS = Requires Some  
Afternoon Shade  
U = Understory Tree  
S = Tall Shrub  
St = Street Tolerant

**Ask your local  
nursery/garden center to  
carry these species!  
And in small stock  
too!**

UPDATED  
11/2025

# Optimal Tree Attributes & Planting Considerations

For: Suburban Yards, Shade Replacement Ordinances,  
Windbreaks, Woodlots, & Forests

**We must plant the right trees in the right way to ensure we have a future forest<sup>1</sup>**

**1. SELECT MULTIPLE SPECIES FROM THE ATTACHED LIST to:**

- Plant in open areas to reforest (remove/reduce lawn)
- Replace removed or fallen trees
- Reforest in canopy gaps, under declining trees, or as part of a forest restoration

**2. LOCAL ECOTYPE** - progeny from NJ or better yet, your county or ecoregion are best suited for your local landscapes.

**3. SMALLER SIZES** include tubelings, 1 gal - 7 gal size

- container grown stock is preferred! (not rootbound)
- Greater chance of survival and success vs. larger stock<sup>2,3</sup>
- Grows faster than larger stock (e.g. B&B >2" caliper size)
- Suffer less from transplant shock = fewer disease issues
- Grows healthier, short term & long term
- Most environmentally sustainable option
- Most economic option

**4. RESTORE DEGRADED SOILS** before planting by mixing in composted leaf litter and/or organic garden soil.

**5. PLANT DENSE STANDS** of many saplings, not just one or two trees; use 3-10 ft spacing and 10-20 per each large tree lost.

- This planting style is natural as trees live in communities
- Their root systems interlock and protect from windthrow

**6. PREVENT DEER DAMAGE** - use physical barriers to stop buck rub and deer browse.

- Best options allow air passage, are rigid, require infrequent upkeep, and 6 ft. tall

**7. LEAVE THE LEAVES** - The best type of mulch! Fallen leaves have evolved with trees and ecosystems<sup>4</sup> to:

- Nourish soil life
- Provide plant health naturally
- Improve plant & climate resiliency
- Support native biodiversity

**Never volcano mulch!**



← 1 YR. OLD  
PIGNUT  
HICKORY  
SEEDLING IN  
A TREE TUBE  
(OR  
TUBELING)  
WHICH  
ALLOWS DEEP  
TAPROOT  
GROWTH.  
THIS IS THE  
IDEAL  
PLANTING  
SIZE & STOCK  
FOR  
HICKORIES

6FT. CAGE,  
PVC-COATED  
WIRE MESH,  
PROTECTING  
A BITTERNUT  
HICKORY  
SAPLING

UPDATED  
11/2025

1. Epiphan, J.N., S.N. Handel., and S.S.Mangiafico. 2025. Disturbance in the Forest of Morristown National Historical Park: Influence of Gap Size on Tree Regeneration. Natural Resource Report NPS/MORR/NRR-2025. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado.
2. Harris, J.R. and Bassuk, N.L., 1993. Tree planting fundamentals. *Journal of Arboriculture*, 19, p.67
3. Tallamy, D.W., 2021. *The Nature of Oaks: the rich ecology of our most essential native trees*. Timber Press.
4. Epiphan, J. 2025. Why Leave the Leaves and How to Do it. Rutgers Fact Sheet [FS1369: Why Leave the Leaves and How to Do it \(Rutgers NJAES\)](#)

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