

2015 Arbor Day Press Release

Friday, April 24, 2015 is Arbor Day! The City of Bethlehem is proud to announce the continuation of its traditional distribution of tree seedlings in celebration of Arbor Day. The trees are free - one per person - to Bethlehem residents on a first come basis starting at 8:30 a.m. The City will be offering Sweet Crabapple, Black Gum, Common Persimmon, and American Witchhazel.

SWEET CRABAPPLE- *Malus coronaria*

Sometimes called Wild Sweet Crabapple or American Crabapple, this small, deciduous tree has a wide spreading crown and is not as common as it should be. Flowers are fragrant, shell-pink and appear later than most crabs. Greenish-yellow 1 in. fruits are attractive to birds or can be used for jelly. The bark of branches is reddish brown or dark reddish gray and smooth. Grows 15 to 30 ft. high.

BLACK GUM – *Nyssa sylvatica*

Also known as Black Tupelo, this native tree boasts great fall color as the lustrous dark green leaves turn a bright yellow, orange, scarlet and maroon. Bark is dark gray to blackish and the thick ridges divide horizontally giving it a blocky look. Grows 30 to 50 ft. high and 20 to 30 ft. wide. Best planted when small.

COMMON PERSIMMON – *Diospyros virginiana*

Common Persimmon is a native species usually not available commercially. The dark green leaves turn from yellow to reddish purple in the fall. Fragrant, white blueberry-shaped flowers appear in May and June and produce 1 to 2 in. deep orange edible fruits. Note: male and female flowers are on separate trees so more than one tree is required for pollination. A tough tree able to survive difficult conditions, it grows 35 to 60 ft. high and 20 to 35 ft. wide.

AMERICAN WITCHHAZEL – *Hamamelis virginiana*

Another native plant that is very adaptable, Common Witchhazel, as it is also known, is a small tree with gray-brown bark. Yellow, fragrant flowers appear from October to December along with handsome yellow fall leaves. Grows 15 to 30 ft. high and wide.

Keep in mind the mature height and spread of the tree seedling you choose when locating them in your garden. These seedlings do not meet the required size for street trees and therefore may NOT be planted between the curb and the sidewalk.

C. Smith
City Forester