



Amelanchier laevis Allegheny Serviceberry¹

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INTRODUCTION

The Allegheny Serviceberry grows in shade or partial shade as an understory tree (Fig. 1). The small tree grows 30 to 40 feet tall and spreads 15 to 20 feet. Multiple stems are upright and highly branched forming a dense shrub, or if properly pruned a small tree. The tree is short-lived, has a rapid growth rate, and can be used as a filler plant or to attract birds. The main ornamental feature is the white flowers borne in drooping clusters in mid spring. The purplish black berries are sweet and juicy but are soon eaten by birds. The fall color is yellow to red. It is well-adapted for planting beneath power lines due to its small size.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Amelanchier laevis*

Pronunciation: am-meh-LANG-kee-er LEE-viss

Common name(s): Allegheny Serviceberry

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; specimen

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: upright; vase shape

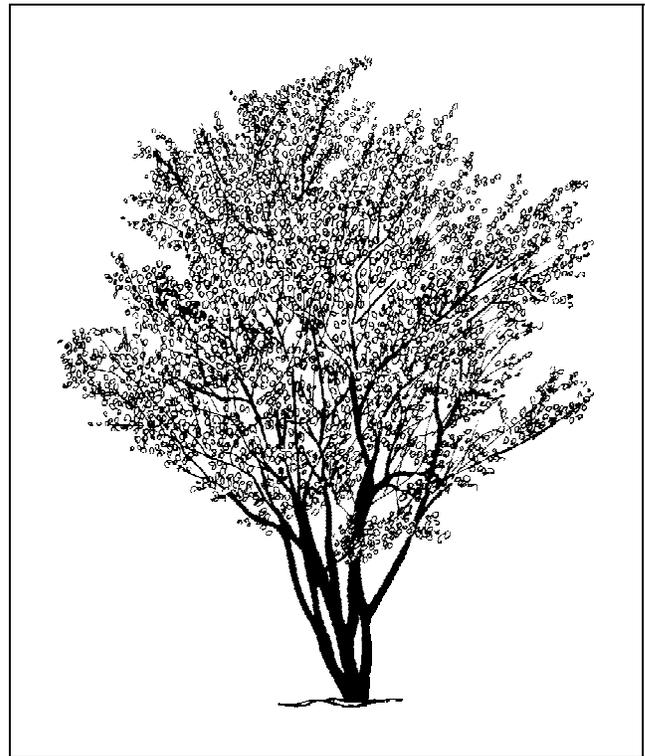


Figure 1. Middle-aged Allegheny Serviceberry.

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong; ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate; reticulate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red; yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: black; purple
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; suited for human consumption; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown; reddish

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: moderate

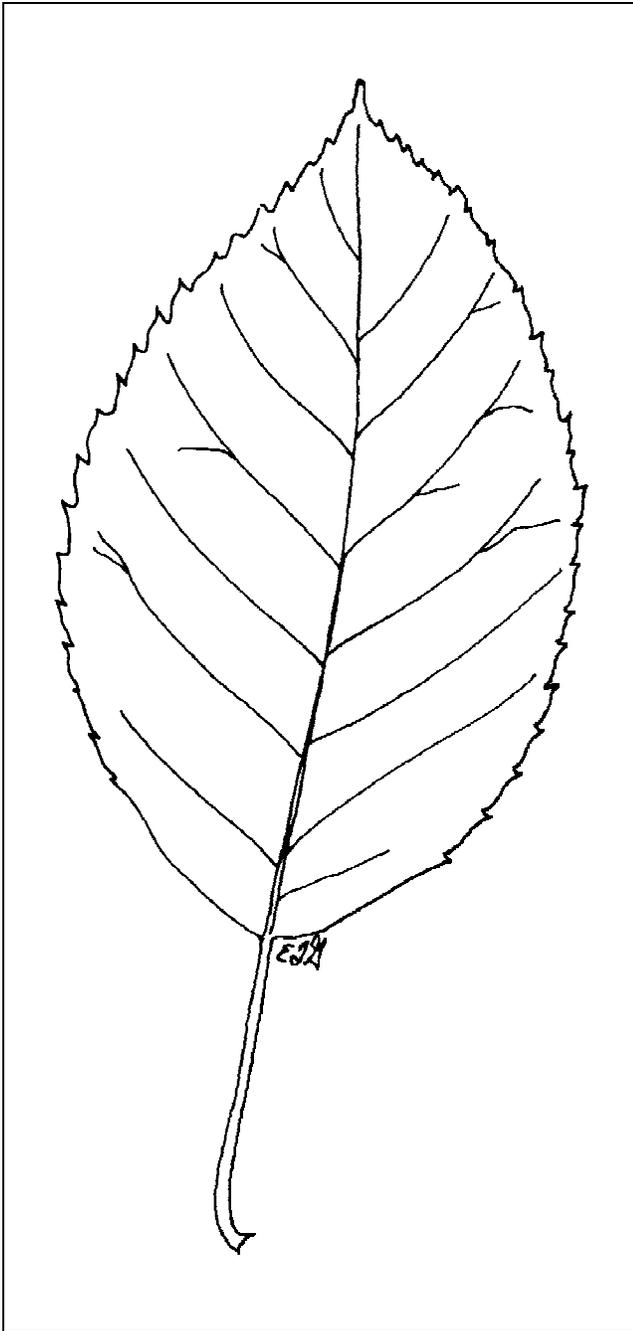


Figure 3. Foliage of Allegheny Serviceberry.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Ozone sensitivity: tolerant

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Pests

Cambium miners cause concern when noticed but are not very damaging to the tree. The mines can extend from a twig all the way down to the roots. The mines form light-colored lines in the bark. No controls are suggested.

A leaf miner will mine leaves, particularly the lower half of the leaf. The mines are irregular in shape.

The leaves of amelanchier are skeletonized by at least two insects. The first insect forms small cocoons on the undersides of leaves. Skeletonized leaves look as though they have windows in them after the insects scrape tissue off the top and bottom of the leaves. The second insect is the larva of the pear sawfly. The larvae are black to greenish black and look slimy. Adult sawflies lay eggs in May and June and again in August. Heavily skeletonized leaves drop off.

Several borers attack amelanchier. Healthy trees are considered less susceptible so regular fertilization and watering during dry spells will help prevent borer attacks.

Spider mites will feed on amelanchier. These insects are hard to detect as they are so small. The main symptom of mite injury is the loss of green leaf coloration. If the infestation is heavy, very fine webbing may be seen. Horticultural oil sprays applied in the spring help control mite infestations.

Aphids of several types suck juices from amelanchier. Heavy infestations cause distortion of the foliage and new growth, and deposit large amounts of sticky honeydew on lower foliage. Black sooty mold will grow on the honeydew.

Diseases

Witches broom, also called black mildew, infects the growing point causing the formation of many stems. The cluster of stems is called the witches broom. Another symptom is a black fungal growth, coating the undersides of the leaves. The damage to the tree is usually not serious and the brooms can be pruned off. No chemical controls are suggested.

Leaf blight can cause leaf drop when a severe infection occurs. The disease causes small purple

spots on the leaves. The spots enlarge and turn brown, later a small black dot will be seen in the center of the spot. Large numbers of spots cause infected leaves to drop.

Fire blight is characterized by the sudden wilting and death of branch tips. The blossoms wilt, blacken and hang on the twig. The bark is shriveled and has small bumps or blisters on it. Sometimes gum oozes out of the infected area and a crack forms between the diseased and healthy bark. Control with chemicals is difficult. Diseased branches should be pruned out. Make the cut at least four inches beyond the diseased area. Disinfect pruning tools with bleach between cuts. Fertilizing heavily with nitrogen increases susceptibility to fire blight.

Powdery mildews of several types cause white powdery growth on the leaves of amelanchier. Late in the season no controls may be needed.

Fruit rot be a problem in wet weather. The fruits are often eaten by birds so may not be around long enough to become diseased.