

# Serviceberry (Amelanchier spp.)

**Exposure:** Full sun to light shade. Zone 3-8.

**Soil:** Most serviceberries prefer moist, well-drained, acidic soil, though are quite tolerant of a range of soils. *A. canadensis* naturally occurs in wet sites, bogs, and swamps, making it a good choice for a wetter site. *A. alnifolia* prefers sandier soils.



**Growth habits:** Vigorous, rounded, multiple-stemmed shrub or tree depending on species and cultural practices. Delightful white flowers in early spring are followed by abundant magenta to blue-black small fruit in July.

- *Amelanchier alnifolia* (Saskatoon): Generally a multi-stemmed shrub from 6 to 15 feet. Tends to form colonies as it ages.
- *Amelanchier canadensis* (Shadblow serviceberry, downy serviceberry): Multi-stemmed shrub from 6 to 10 feet. Suckers from the base and tends to form colonies as it ages.
- *Amelanchier laevis* ('Allegheny' serviceberry): Narrow, open native tree, single- or multi-stemmed, 18-20 feet tall by 18-20 feet wide.
- *Amelanchier lamarckii* (Juneberry): Large shrub or small tree, 20-30 feet tall by 10-15 feet wide.

**Landscape uses:** Specimen tree or shrub, shrub border, foundation plant, orchard.

**Edible/Medicinal properties:** Sweet blueberry-sized blue black fruit is loaded with anthocyanins and other antioxidant compounds on par with blueberry. The flesh tastes like a mild blueberry and the small edible seed tastes like almond for a tasty combination. The fruit is delightful for fresh eating, pies, and making the finest of preserves.

**Pollination:** Self fertile.

## Caring for your serviceberry plants

**Pruning:** Serviceberry main stems and limbs can have very sculpture-like shapes, especially *A. laevis* and *A. lamarckii*. For these, select the main stems you like and prune away other stems and unwanted branches. The *A. canadensis* lower branches are often pruned away to reveal the beautiful bark. In all cases, remove any dead or diseased wood and crossing branches as you would for any other large shrub or tree.

**Watering:** The serviceberry will likely need to be watered once a week if there isn't enough rain.

**Fertilization:** Apply a good general purpose fertilizer in April and June.

## Frequently asked questions about serviceberries

What's that white fuzzy stuff on the leaves?

Serviceberry plants in damp environments are susceptible to downy mildew. You can either let it be, knowing that it will disappear when the weather is drier, or spray with Organocide, an OMRI-approved fungicide.

## Additional information

See the Useful Plants Nursery website at [www.usefulplants.org](http://www.usefulplants.org) for videos demonstrating planting and other plant care techniques.