TOP' NATIVE TREES
By Pat Curran

Relatively long-lived, disease/pest resistant, winter-hardy, good foliage quality
‘Native’ to the Northeast or nearby states

Native Trees for Sun

- Acer rubrum ‘Red Sunset’, red maple, swamp maple
  - prefers it moist; reliable fall color
- Betula nigra ‘Heritage’, river birch
  - borer-resistant; bark interest
- Catalpa speciosa, northern catalpa
  - seedpods on lawn; fast-growing
- Chamaecyparis thyoides, Atlantic whitecedar
  - evergreen; tolerates soggy site
- Cladrastis kentukea, American yellowwood
  - gray bark; pink variety available
- Cotinus obovatus, American smoketree
  - fall foliage color; drought-resistant
- Diospyros virginiana, persimmon
  - edible fruit, usually dioecious
- Gymnocladus dioicus, Kentucky coffeetree
  - very durable; seedpods (dioecious)
- Liriodendron tulipifera, tulip tree
  - gets very large; needs moist soil
- Maclura pomifera, Osage orange
  - thorns; enormous fruits (dioecious)
- Picea glauca, white spruce
  - drought/cold resistant evergreen
- Quercus rubra, northern red oak
  - fast-growing, easy-to-transplant oak
- Taxodium distichum, bald cypress
  - deciduous conifer; hardier than Metasequoia

Native Trees for Light Shade

- Acer pensylvanicum, moosewood, striped maple
  - native understory tree
- Asimina triloba, pawpaw
  - edible fruit, tropical foliage effect
- Carpinus caroliniana, musclewood, American hornbeam
  - adaptable; tolerates occasional flooding
- Cercis canadensis, redbud
  - showy blooms; self-sow a lot; cultivars <hardy
- Cornus alternifolia, pagoda dogwood
  - showy blooms; self-sow a lot; cultivars <hardy
- Halesia carolina ‘Wedding Bells’, silverbell tree
  - spring blooms even when young
- Magnolia acuminata, cucumber tree
  - large shade tree
- Magnolia virginiana, sweetbay magnolia
  - needs acid soil; does well in wet sites; semi-evergreen
- Nyssa sylvatica, black gum
  - consistent fall color; dioecious

Reference:
Native Plants of the Northeast: A Guide for Gardening & Cultivation, Donald J. Leopold (professor at SUNY ESF, Syracuse)

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses, Sixth Edition, Michael Dirr (invaluable and comprehensive, but no color pictures)

Dirr’s Encyclopedia of Trees & Shrubs, Michael Dirr (great color pictures, but not as comprehensive)

Shrubs & Vines for American Gardens, Trees for American Gardens, 2 books by Donald Wyman (older references with great plant lists, but do not use USDA hardiness zones)

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