Native Soft Mast of East Texas and the Western Coastal Plain







United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

East Texas Plant Materials Center



Fleshy fruit (soft mast) is a key food resource for many game and nongame wildlife species. Most species of birds and mammals consume fruit at least occasionally. Fruit consumption has been linked to mammalian survival and reproductive success. Abundant fruit in young forests may be a particularly important high-energy food source for neotropical migratory birds during fall migration. During winter, soft mast is important to many vertebrates when other food resources are scarce. Land managers need to know how fruit availability varies among forest types and age-classes, seasonally, and over time as forests mature.

Source: USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station www.srs.fs.usda.gov.

The plants featured in this publication are common to the East Texas Plant Materials Center's service area, and are utilized by multiple species of wildlife; from large mammals to migrant, neotropical birds. They were selected to provide overlapping periods of soft mast availability throughout the course of the year. Some species have improved cultivars developed by the Plant Materials Program and other agencies, and most, if not all, are available from commercial sources.











Crataegus aestivalis (Walter) Torr. & A. Gray

Mayhaw



Common Service Berry

Rubus trivialis

Southern Dewberry



Shrub/Tree

White

Red to Purple

May-June

up to 36

Medium | Coarse

Saw Tooth Blackberry Rubus argutus Link



Perennial Vine/Subshrub

White

Deep Purple

May-July

8 of qu

Tree

Whit

Red

April-N

up to

Mediu

Low



,	Perennial Vine/Subshrub
e	White
	Deep Purple
May	April-May
25	2 to 4
ım	Medium Coarse
,	Medium

White

Deep Purple April-May

2 to 4

Medium | Coarse

Low

Medium

Medium



Fine | Medium | Coarse Medium

Medium

Fire Tolerance

Fertility

Growth Form

Bloom Color

Fruit Color

Height (ft)

Soil Types

Fruiting Period

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ï	É		

Tree

Greenish White

Red to Dark Purple

April-May

up to 70

Fine | Medium | Coarse

Medium





Medium



Light Requirement

Drought Tolerance



Bare Root | Seed

Sprig | Seed | Cutting Bare Root



Cutting | Seed | Bare Root



Propogate Remarks

Recognizable by having both ovate and mitten shaped leaves, it is one of the earliest soft mast producers. Fruit is born on female trees only and drops quickly when ripe. The fruit is utilized by a wide array of birds and mammals and have a tart, pleasant taste.

Mayhaw is best known for iellies made from its fruit. it is typically found in low lying areas that flood seasonally. Its fruit is utilized by birds and mammals, and the dense thickets of thorny branches make excellent cover for game animals.

Dew berries are one of the earliest rubus species to ripen, and are utilized by nearly all animals of the bear, fox, racoon, and forest. Deer browse young stems and they provide excellent cover for qual chicks. This species can be identified by its red, bristly, hair-like thorns.

tolerant soft mast producers.

Utilized the same as dew berries by wildlife. blackberries can be differentiated by their catclaw-like thorns. They form dense thickets in open areas such as cut overs. Berries of the rubus genus are excellent for fresh eating, jellies, and desserts.



foliage is more palatable

in fall. Berries are an

excellent source of vita-

min C. Caution: Species

with red berries are toxic.

wildlife. The foliage is

browsed occassionally by

white-tailed deer and the

fruits make excellent

elles.

Bloom Color

Fruit Color

Height (ft)

Soil Types

Fertility

Propogate

Remarks

foxes, coyotes, racoons, opossums, and turkey.

Fruit production is more

prolific than seen in most

muscadines and larger in

size than summer grape.

cyanogenic glycoside

which can leads to

cyanide poisoning in

used to make jelies.

livestock. The fruit can be

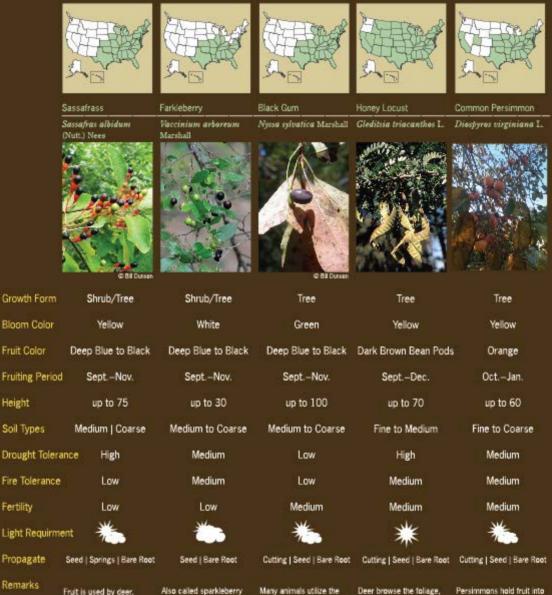
be eaten fresh or used in elles. Grape vines store large amounts of fresh water that maybe utilized in emergency situations for survival.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Plant Materials Program is comprised of a nationwide network of 27 centers that seek to solve natural resource problems through the use of native plants. Scientist at plant materials centers work to support NRCS field office operations through the development of plant based technologies that can be applied to conservation practices and standards. Texas has three plant materials centers located in Nacogdoches, Kingsville, and Knox City which work cooperatively with state and federal agencies, commercial businesses, and seed and nursery associations.

Plants selected by the Plant Materials Program have been used to develop biomass for biofuel production, sequester carbon from the atmosphere, reduce erosion, restore wetlands and other disturbed critical areas, improve water quality through the protection of riparian areas and uptake of nutrient runoff from agricultural sites, restore coastal dunes, and improve wildlife habitat. The Plant Materials Program is adaptable and ever evolving to meet new conservation challenges as they emerge.







Propagate Remarks

Fertility

Fruit Color

Height

Soil Types

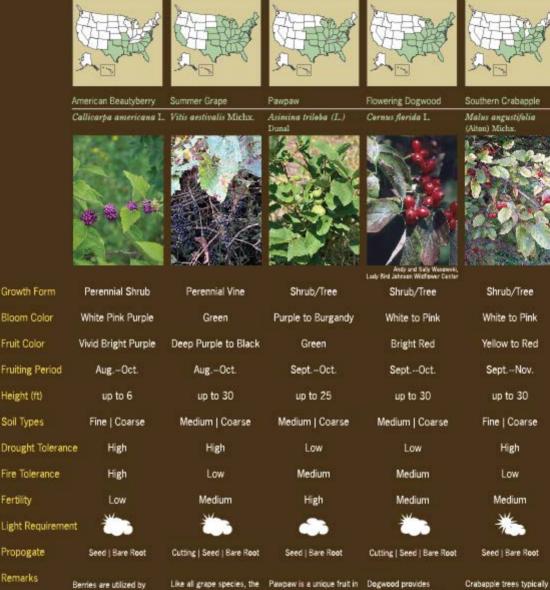
turkey, bear, covotes, racoons, and birds, and foliage is a medium preferred browse. Portions of this plant have been used as flavorings and spice. Caution: It contains safrole and has been linked to liver damage and cancer.

or huckleberry, this is the largest member of the blueberry family. The fruits are utilized by birds and mammals, and the foliage is a medium preferred browse. Some individual trees bear copious amounts of tart. pithy fruit.

fruit including black bear, deer, and wild turkey. There are male and female trees with only females producing fruit. Foliage is highly palatable. to deer, and turns a brilliant red in the fall making it excellent for landscaping.

and utilize the sweet smelling seed pods. heavily in the fall. It provides excellent cover. Caution: Honey locust spreads rapidly, and has thoms capable of oots. Thornless cutivers are available.

winter when other soft mast is not available. Fruits are relished by white-tailed deer and other mammals. Fruit drops well after leaves shed and is very astringent until after first frost. Only female trees bear fruit.



Propogate Remarks

Fertility

Bloom Color

Fruit Color

Height (ft)

Soil Types

birds, deer, and other mammals. The foliage is highly palatable to browsers and acts as an insect repellant when crushed and rubbed on the skin. It is one of our most important wildlife plants providing browse, soft mast, and cover.

foliage is palatable to browsers, but may grow out of reach in heavily browsed areas. The grapes of this species are much smaller than muscadines and are utilized by birds and mammals alike. Fruit is tart with little pulp.

the custard apple family. It has a banana-like texture and taste, and is utilized by white-tailed deer, black bear, racoons, opossum, coyote, and fox. It favors moist, fertile soils, and will grow in full shade where other species may struggle.

medium quality browse, but its fruits are high in fat and calcium. They are utilized extensively by birds, including wild turkey. Small mammals, bear, and deer also use the fruits heavily. The wood is exceptionally hard.

Crabapple trees typically produce large amounts of fruit that cling to the tree well into early winter. The leaves are a high quality browse, and the fruits are relished by nearly every animal in the forest. Improved varieties are commercially available.



East Texas Plant Materials Center



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Additional Resources

Quail Unlimited | www.qu.org

NRCS Plants Database | www.plants.usda.gov

Texas Parks & Wildlife | www.tpwd.state.tx.us

National Wild Turkey Federation | www.nwtf.org

Quality Deer Management Association | www.qdma.com

USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station | www.srs.fs.usda.gov