

# Plant Recommendations For Benton County, Arkansas



Compiled by:  
Benton County Master Gardeners

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## **What is a Master Gardener?**



A Master Gardener is a member of the volunteer staff of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service who helps disseminate horticulture information throughout the county. Similar programs are conducted through University Cooperative Extension Service organizations throughout the country.

## **What do Master Gardeners do?**

Master Gardeners work at county fairs and plant clinics; answer phone requests for gardening information; and conduct short courses for the public. We publish a newsletter, work on educational projects, and meet monthly to exchange ideas and learn about gardening. The program offers a unique opportunity to make friends, to learn about plants and gardening, and to use our horticultural knowledge and other talents in our community. Activities are supervised by a Cooperative Extension Agent.

## **How do I become a Master Gardener?**

Master Gardeners must complete a comprehensive 40 hour training session before joining the group and meet volunteer time and education requirements each year. For more information, call the Benton County Extension Service at 479-271-1060 or visit our website: <http://home.bentoncountygardening.org>.

## How to Use This Booklet

This booklet was compiled by surveying Master Gardeners and reviewing literature published by the Research and Extension branch of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

**Plant Names** This booklet contains lists of plants by major groupings. The plants are listed in order by their common name followed by the scientific name in italics (including variety or cultivar where appropriate). The common name is listed first because this is most often what you will see on the plant labels in nurseries and garden centers. Where appropriate, the scientific name is given to avoid confusion where similar common names are used for different plant species.

The scientific name consists of the genus and species. In addition, those may be followed by variety and/or cultivar. If multiple species are available for the same genus, the abbreviation spp. will be used in place of actual species names.

**Native Plants** are plants that occur naturally in our area and perform a beneficial function within the ecosystem. The use of native plants is encouraged over non-native species because native plants are suited for the local growing conditions; they require less irrigation and are often disease resistant. Native plants also provide food for pollinators and other insects which in turn provide food for birds and other small animals. Native plants are denoted by an N in the column following the plant name in appropriate plant sections.

**Culture-** The culture column will give sun and moisture requirements. Additional cultural information may be included in columns for size and spacing or in the comments field. The information given will vary by plant type. Each of the cultural terms is defined in the glossary on page 14.

Sun Exposure: FS - Full Sun, PS - Part Shade, Sh - Shade

Moisture Requirements: D - Dry -, M - Medium, W – Wet

When selecting plants for your garden, choose plants for which the cultural requirements match your site's growing conditions, and group plants together that have similar cultural requirements.

## Trees

Trees will ultimately be the largest element in a garden. When well maintained, they grow quite quickly, not only upwards, but outwards. When making your selection, be clear about the tree's eventual shape, size and color.

Name	N*	H=Height S=Spread	Comments
Trees for Shade			
Bald Cypress <i>Taxodium distichum</i>	N	H: 50' – 70' S: 20' – 45'	Beautiful bronze needles in fall, drought tolerant
Pin Oak <i>Quercus palustris</i>	N	H:50' – 70' S:40' – 60'	Fall color, low hanging branches
Red Maple <i>Acer rubrum</i> "Autumn Blaze" or "Red Sunset"	N	H: 40' – 50' S: 30' – 40'	Beautiful fall color
Sugar Maple <i>Acer saccharum</i>	N	H:40' – 80' S:30' – 60'	Beautiful fall Colors, plant in partial shade to protect bark from sun scald
White Oak <i>Quercus alba</i>	N	H:50' – 80' S:50' – 80'	Fall color a dark purplish red or brown contrasts light colored flaky bark on mature trees.
Sweet Gum <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> 'Rotundiloba'		H: 60' – 70' S:20' – 30'	Does not produce balls
Flowering Trees			
American Smoke Tree <i>Cotinus obovatus</i>	N	H:20' – 30' S: 20' – 30'	
Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i>	N	H:15' – 30' S:15' – 30'	Understory tree, benefits from sun protection
Fringe Tree <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	N	H:12' – 20' S:12' – 20'	
Red Bud <i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'Forest Pansy' or 'Oklahoma'	N	H: 20' -30' S: 25' – 35'	
Saucer Magnolia <i>Magnolia x soulangeana</i>		H:20' – 25' S:20' – 25'	Deciduous
Southern Magnolia <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> cv. 'Bracken's Brown Beauty'	N	H:20' – 30' S:15' – 25'	Evergreen, named cultivar is smaller and more cold hardy than the species
Tulip Tree or Yellow Poplar <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	N	H: 60' – 90' S: 30' – 50'	Fast growing large specimen tree
Yellowwood <i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	N	H:30' – 50' S:40' – 50'	White flowers, biennial bloomer

\* An "N" in this column signifies a native species or a cultivar of a native species.

## Shrubs

*Shrubs are used for screens, barriers, windbreaks, ornamentals, ground covers and wildlife shelters. When choosing a shrub, consider flowers or colorful fruit, interesting foliage, fall color, bark characteristics, winter colors of foliage or branches, and the shapes of the plants.*

Shrub	N*	Culture	Comments
Althea (Rose of Sharon) <i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>		FS/PS M	Late summer flowers
American Beauty Berry <i>Callicarpa americana</i>	N	FS/PS M	Purple berries in fall
Black Haw Viburnum <i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	N	FS/PS D/M	Summer flowers, fall color, beneficial to wildlife
Crape myrtle <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>		FS M	Summer flowering, choose according to mature size to match your site
Forsythia <i>Forsythia x intermedia</i>		FS/PS M	Yellow flowers in early spring
Golden Currant <i>Ribes aureum</i>	N	FS/PS M	Yellow flowers in early spring, native alternative to forsythia
Juniper <i>Juniperus spp.</i>		FS M	Evergreen
Magnolia x 'Ann', 'Betty', 'Jane', others		FS/PS M	Similar flower to Saucer Magnolia, shrub form
Ninebark <i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	N	FS/PS M	Many cultivars available
Red leaf barberry <i>Berberis thunbergii</i>		FS D/M	Evergreen
Rhododendron / Azalea <i>Rhododendron spp</i>		Sh M Require Acidic Soil	Spring Flowering, most are evergreen, some native deciduous.
Spiraea <i>Spiraea spp.</i>		FS M	Many species
Virginia Sweet Spire <i>Itea virginica</i>	N	FS/PS M/W	Spring flowers, fall color
Weigela <i>Weigela florida</i>		FS M	Spring flowers
Yew <i>Taxus cuspidata</i>		FS/PS M	Evergreen

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Moisture: D – Dry, M – Medium, W – Wet

## Groundcover (including Turfgrass)

A ground cover is a low-growing plant that prevents or discourages weed growth or erosion. Lawns are effective in sunny areas with slight to moderate slope. Other ground covers should be used in shady areas, on steep banks or slopes, in areas where tree roots protrude above the soil surface, in shrub beds or borders as under-plantings, and as filler plants in and along walks and pavements. For complete lawn selection and maintenance information visit <http://uaex.edu/yard-garden/lawns/>.

Turfgrass	Exposure	Moisture	Comments
Tall Fescue Mix	Light Shade	1" per week in growing season	Grass will not grow in deep shade
Bermudagrass Recommended Varieties: 'Midlawn', 'Patriot', 'Quickstand', 'Riviera', 'Yukon'	Full Sun	1" per week in growing season	Very aggressive; readily invades adjoining areas

Groundcover	N *	Culture	Comments
<i>Ajuga spp.</i>		FS/PS M	
Allegheny spurge <i>Pachysandra procumbens</i>		PS/Sh M	
Cotoneaster <i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>		FS/PS M	
Creeping Juniper <i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>		FS M	
Creeping Phlox <i>Phlox subulata</i>	N	FS M	
Lamium <i>Lamium maculatum</i>		PS/Sh D/M	
Lily of the Valley <i>Convallaria majalis</i>		PS/Sh M	Aggressive Spreader
Lily turf <i>Liriope muscari</i>		FS/PS M	Choose a clump forming variety
Missouri Evening Primrose <i>Oenothera macrocarpa</i>	N	FS D	Large yellow flowers
<i>Sedum spp.</i>		FS D	Many species available
Thyme <i>Thymus spp.</i>		FS D/M	
<i>Vinca minor</i>		FS/PS D/M	Can be invasive
Wild Ginger <i>Asarum canadense</i>	N	PS/Sh M/W	

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## Tree Fruit

Fruit	Cultivars	Comments
Apple	Williams Pride	July – August ripening, red
	Liberty	July – August ripening, red
	Arkansas Black	October - November ripening, red
	Enterprise	Good disease resistance, September ripening, red
	Golden Delicious	September ripening, yellow
Pear	Seckel	Small Fruited “sugar pear”
	Comice	Excellent cross-pollinator
Plum	Ozark Premier, Morris, AU Producer	
Peach	Not recommended due to late freeze and disease issues.	

All of these fruit trees require cross pollination.

## Small Fruit

Fruit	Cultivars	Comments
Blackberry	Ouachita, Osage, Natchez	All thornless, floricanefruiters
Blueberry Northern Highbush	Bluecrop, Blueray, Duke	
Grapes	Mars, Jupiter, Neptune	Seedless
Muscadines	Nesbitt, Nobel	Black
	Carlos, Summit	Bronze
Raspberry	Heritage, Josephine	Both Everbearing
Strawberry	Cardinal, Chandler	June Berries
	Albion, San Andreas	Everbearing

For additional articles and information about fruits visit the website

<http://uaex.edu/yard-garden/fruits-nuts/>.



## Annuals

An annual is a plant that completes its lifecycle in single growing season.

Name	Sun Exposure	Color	Spacing	Height
Begonias	PS/FS	Red, Orange, Pink, White	10" – 15"	8" – 15"
Caladium	PS	Foliage, Green, White, Red, Pink	12" – 18"	18" – 30"
Coleus	PS	Red, Multi-colored foliage	12"	12" – 24"
Cosmos	FS	Pink, White, Orange	16"	30" – 48"
Dusty miller	FS	Grey Foliage	10"	12" – 18"
Impatiens	PS	Red, Pink, White	12"	8" – 24"
Lantana	FS	Yellow, Red	12"	12" – 16"
Marigold	FS	Yellow, Orange	12"	8" – 14"
Mexican heather	FS	Purple	12"	12"
Pansies	FS	Multiple Colors	10"	10" – 14"
Pentas	FS	White, Pink, Red	12"	12" – 24"
Periwinkle	FS	Pink, White, Magenta	12"	12"
Petunia	FS	Multiple Colors	12"	12" – 18"
Salvia	FS	Blue, Red, White	12"	14" – 30 "
Snap Dragons	FS	Multiple Colors	10"	8" – 24"
Sunflower	FS	Yellow, Orange, Rust	12" – 18"	3' – 10'
Sweet potato vine	PS/FS	Chartreuse, Purple	18" – 24"	6" – 10" 48" Spread
Zinnia	FS	Multiple Colors	16"	18" – 36"

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- Annuals should receive a minimum of ½ to 1 inch of rain or equivalent irrigation per week.
- Wait until after the expected last frost date, April 20, to plant annuals.
- If starting annuals from seed, start indoors approximately 6 - 8 weeks before the last frost date.

## Perennials

A perennial is a plant that returns year after year.

Name	N*	Culture	Comments
<b>Flowering Perennials</b>			
Bee Balm <i>Monarda didyma</i>		FS/PS M/W	Purple or red flowers
Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> var. <i>sullivantii</i> 'Goldsturm'		FS D/M	
Bleeding Heart <i>Lamprocapnos spectabilis</i>		PS/Sh M	Previously named <i>Dicentra spectabilis</i> , white form is cultivar 'Alba'
Butterfly Milkweed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	N	FS D/M	Host plant for Monarch butterfly, orange
Celandine Poppy <i>Stylophorum diphyllum</i>	N	PS/Sh M/W	Yellow early spring flowers
Columbine <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	N	FS/PS M	Native has yellow and red flowers
Coneflower <i>Echinacea spp.</i>	N	FS/PS D/M	Multiple colors available
Daffodil <i>Narcissus spp.</i>		FS/PS M	Plant bulbs in the fall
Daylily <i>Heemerocallis spp.</i>		FS/PS M	Many colors available
Foxglove beardtongue <i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	N	FS D/M	White
Indian Pink <i>Spigelia marilandica</i>	N	PS/Sh M	Attracts hummingbirds, red and yellow trumpet shaped flowers
Indigo <i>Baptisia spp.</i>	N	FS/PS D/M	Blue, White
Iris		FS M	Multiple forms and colors
Lenten Rose <i>Helleborus orientalis</i>		PS/Sh M	Very early bloomer (Jan/Feb), evergreen foliage
Shasta Daisy <i>Leucanthemum</i> × <i>superbum</i> 'Becky'		FS D/M	
Tall Garden Phlox <i>Phlox paniculata</i>	N	FS M	Purple, look for mildew resistant cultivars.
Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i>		FS D/M	Fernlike foliage, can spread aggressively

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Name	N*	Culture	Comments
<b>Foliage Perennials</b>			
Arkansas Blue Star <i>Amsonia hubrichtii</i>	N	FS/PS M	
Blue fescue <i>Festuca glauca</i>		FS D/M	
Blue Star <i>Amsonia ciliata</i>	N	FS/PS M	Foliage turns an attractive yellow color in fall.
Christmas Fern <i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	N	PS/Sh D/M	Evergreen foliage
Coral Bells (Alum Root) <i>Heuchera villosa</i>	N	FS/PS M	Hybrid forms available in many foliage shapes and colors
False Solomon's Seal <i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>	N	PS M	Flower forms at end of stem.
Hosta <i>Hosta spp.</i> Many Varieties		FS/PS M	Various sizes and foliage colors available, eaten by deer
Lamb's Ear <i>Stachys byzantina</i>		FS D/M	Hairy grey leaves
Sedum <i>Sedum spp.</i>		FS/PS D/M	Many species, some tall and flowering, others ground hugging
Sensitive Fern <i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	N	PS/Sh M/W	
Solomon's Seal <i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	N	PS/FS M/W	Bell like flowers hang below stem.
Wormwood <i>Artemisia spp.</i>		FS D/M	Avoid variegated species which can be invasive

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Many foliage perennials may be utilized as a groundcover by mass planting with less spacing to allow plants to grow together and shade the soil.

## Invasive Species

Non-native invasive species are plants that when introduced into the area spread rapidly and overtake natural areas blocking out native plants from the area. There are no natural competitors in our environment to keep these plants in check. As a result, they aggressively invade and degrade our native ecosystems, sometimes resulting in long-term damage to wildlife habitat, soil, water quality, and sometimes even infrastructure. Although seldom carried by nurseries, you may have friends who share plants that are spreading in their yard and are “easy to grow.” Avoid using these plants in your landscape:

Bamboo many spp.

Bermuda grass – great for lawns, trouble if you don’t have solid barriers

Bishop’s Weed – *Aegopodium podagraria*

Callery Pear/Bradford Pear – *Pyrus calleryana*

Chinaberry tree- *Melia azedarach*

Cleome – spider flower

Cogongrass, Japanese bloodgrass, or Red Baron bloodgrass

*Imperata cylindrica* ‘Rubra’

Creeping jenny/moneywort - *Lysimachia nummularia*

Creeping lily turf – *Liriope spicata* (spreads by rhizomes)

English Ivy – *Hedera helix*

Italian arum – *Arum italicum*

Japanese Honeysuckle – *Lonicera japonica*

Mint – *Menta spp.*

Moonflower – *Ipomoea alba*

Purple loosestrife - *Lythrum salicaria*

*Vinca major*

Winter creeper – *Euonymus fortunei*

Wisteria: Chinese – *Wisteria sinensis* or Japanese – *Wisteria floribunda*

## Useful Horticultural Information for Benton County

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone: Mostly 6b (-5° F to 0°F) Far western and southwestern parts of the county are in zone 7a (0°F to 5°F)

Average Last Freeze Date: April 20

Average First Freeze Date: October 15

### Getting the Most from the Cooperative Extension Service

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service provides a variety of services to assist you in making the most of your home gardening activities.

**Research Publications** compiled by the Extension Service provide a wealth of science based information on yard and gardening topics. Visit their website at <http://uaex.edu/yard-garden/home-landscape> to view and search for publications on topics of interest to you.

**Soil Testing** is a free service in Arkansas. A soil test shows an estimate of the supply of plant food elements in the soil, and if the soil is in the correct pH range (too acid or too alkaline). Soil test recommendations include the amount and type of fertilizer and other amendments, as well as application methods and timing, to get the best results for what you are growing. For instructions on preparing a soil test sample see Extension Publication FSA 2121 (available online).

**Education and Outreach Activities** of the Extension Service provide training and demonstration of garden topics at community events such as farmers markets, festivals, and county fairs. Check the Benton County Master Gardener website, <http://home.bentoncountygardening.org>, or the local news outlets for information about upcoming events near you.

## Glossary

**Cultivar** – In plant names, the term cultivar is short for cultivated variety. Cultivars are selected and bred by humans. The cultivar name is capitalized and is written in plain text within single quotes following the species name (and variety if appropriate). The abbreviation cvs. means multiple cultivars.

**Florican** – Relates to blackberries and raspberries. Florican fruiters bear fruit on the 2<sup>nd</sup> year cane.

**Variety** in plant naming is a naturally occurring form of the species that has different characteristics in appearance or growth habit. Variety is written in italics, all lower case, following the species name.

### **Sun Exposure:**

FS: Full Sun – A minimum of 6 hours of sunlight per day.

PS: Partial Sun – Less than 6 hours of sunlight; a minimum of 3 hours of sunlight. Preferably morning sun and afternoon shade.

Sh: Full Shade – An area such as along the north side of a wall or under a dense tree where the plant receives very little or no direct sunlight.

### **Moisture Requirements:**

D: Dry – little or no supplemental watering required.

M: Medium – Soil should not be allowed to become completely dry during the growing season.

W: Wet – Tolerates or requires soil that remains moist throughout the growing season.

## References/Resources

The following documents were used as references in preparing this guide:

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