

Landscaped Plants Used on the Farm

Dwarf Barbados Cherry (*Malpighia glabra*)

This is an outstanding small evergreen shrub for central and south Texas. Leaves are a glossy dark green with an abundance of multi-colored pink flowers from late Spring through the Fall. Flowers are followed by attractive bright red berries that are prized by songbirds. Barbados cherry grows to a maximum height of 3-4' and is easily hedged for a more formal look. It is drought and cold tolerant and will keep its leaves on down to the mid 20's. In unusually cold winters, the plant may freeze to the ground but quickly recovers its original size.

Dwarf Barbados Cherry is deer-resistant.

Pineapple guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*, synonym *Acca sellowiana*)

An [evergreen shrub](#) or small [tree](#), 1-7 m in height, originating from the highlands of southern [Brazil](#), parts of [Colombia](#), [Uruguay](#) and northern [Argentina](#). It has been spotted in [Georgia](#) and both flowering and fruiting in Lafayette, Louisiana and in Charleston, South Carolina, and Northern California. It is widely cultivated as a garden plant and fruiting tree in [New Zealand](#).

The [fruit](#) matures in [autumn](#) and is green, ellipsoid-shaped and the size of a chicken egg. It has a sweet, aromatic flavor. The flesh is juicy and is divided into a clear jelly-like seed pulp and a firmer, slightly gritty opaque flesh nearer the skin. Ripe fruit is very prone to bruising; maintaining the fruit in good condition for any length of time is not easy. This, along with the short period of optimum ripeness, probably explains why Feijoas, although delicious, are not widely exported, and where grown commercially are often only sold close to the source of the crop. Feijoas can be cool-stored for approximately a month and still have a few days of shelf life at optimum eating maturity..

Some [grafted](#) cultivars are self fertile. Most are not, and require a [pollenizer](#). Seedlings may or may not be of usable quality, and may or may not be self fertile.

Bird Pepper (*Chile piquin*)

A favorite for spicing up Mexican dishes, this diminutive pepper is also an irresistible treat for local songbirds and our flock of chickens and guineas. In the wild, the plant is found on ledges along rivers, in thickets, and along arroyos of the Edward's Plateau and south Texas. Madrone Nursery's chile piquins originated with a start from a hardy plant that has been cultivated by a friend's family for over 80 years. These have excellent freeze-tolerance and provide a bounty of very tasty peppers for cooking and sharing.

Chile piquin is deer-resistant.

Butternut

This tree produces a delicious, buttery nut that truly lives up to its name. Don't let the rough shell fool you! They are native to the midwest, eastern and southern US but will do well throughout most of the country. They are the hardiest member of the walnut family. Zone 3-9.

Loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*)

It is an [evergreen](#) large [shrub](#) or small [tree](#), with a rounded crown, short trunk and woolly new twigs. The tree can grow to 5-10 m tall, but is often smaller, about 3-4 m.

The [leaves](#) are alternate, simple, 10-25 cm long, dark green, tough and leathery in texture, with a serrated margin, and densely velvety-hairy below with thick yellow-brown pubescence; the young leaves are also densely pubescent above, but this soon rubs off.

Loquats are unusual among fruit trees in that the [flowers](#) appear in the autumn or early winter, and the fruits are ripe in late winter or early spring. In Northern California, loquats bear fruit in May, while in Southern California, loquats bear fruit in April. The flowers are 2 cm diameter, white, with five petals, and produced in stiff [panicles](#) of three to ten flowers.

Loquat fruits, growing in clusters, are oval, rounded or pear-shaped, 3-5 cm long, with a smooth or downy, yellow or orange, sometimes red-blushed skin. The succulent, tangy flesh is white, yellow or orange and sweet to subacid or acid, depending on the [cultivar](#).

The Loquat is easy to grow and is often also grown as an [ornamental tree](#); it was commonly grown in [California](#) by the 1870s. It also thrives in the [humid south-east Texas \(Houston\) climate](#), as well as all over [Israel](#).

Goumi (*Elaeagnus multiflora*)

is a species of [Elaeagnus](#), native to [China](#), [Korea](#) and [Japan](#).

It is a [deciduous](#) or [semi-evergreen shrub](#) or small [tree](#) growing to 2-8 m tall, with a trunk up to 30 cm diameter with dark brown [bark](#). The shoots are densely covered in minute red-brown scales. The [leaves](#) are ovate to elliptic, 3-10 cm long and 2-5 cm broad, green above, and silvery to orange-brown below with dense small scales.

The [flowers](#) are solitary or in pairs in the leaf axils, fragrant, with a four-lobed pale yellowish-white 1.5 cm long corolla; flowering is in mid spring.

The [fruit](#) is round to oval [drupe](#) 1 cm long, silvery-scaled orange, ripening red dotted with silver or brown, pendulous on a 2-3 cm peduncle. When ripe in mid to late summer, the fruit is juicy and edible, with an acidic taste.

Medlar (*Mespilus*)

The Medlar is a fascinating fruit. Botanically somewhere between a pear and a hawthorn, it blossoms in solitary fashion in May at the end of the shoots of the same year's growth. The spring flowers are large, white fading in pink as they age. The unique dark green brown fruit looks somewhat like a small crabapple which forms without stem at the end of the shoot and becomes the half of a sphere with the petals arranged around the edge of the flattish top.

The decorative fruit is picked after a hard frost. The flesh is then still hard, green and austere and must be kept on a dry cool shelf until the pulp softens and mellows when it turns a light brown. This process is known as "bletting". The pulp has then a distinctive pleasantly acidulous flavor.

It makes a beautiful small tree that fruits early, a 3-year-old tree producing a good crop. It has curious branches forming sharp-angled elbows. The leaves are large luxuriantly green and downy and turn beautifully red in the fall. Easy to grow, hardy, not particular as to soil or culture, it can be grown for its eye-catching ornamental value alone.

Mexican Plum (*Prunus mexicana*)

The Mexican Plum is a showy addition to your landscape, rewarding you with a prolific display of sweet-scented flowers in early Spring followed by edible fruit that makes a delicious jam or jelly. This small tree is ideal in urban settings and does well in sunny locations or part shade. In larger plantings, it is an attractive understory tree and provides habitat for small birds such as wrens and finches.

Here at the nursery we have also noted numerous Polyphemus moth cocoons in our trees and speculate that the densely interlocking branches help guard these large insects from predators as they are emerging.

Mexican Plum should be protected from deer when small.

Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii*)

This hardy perennial thrives in mixed to dense shade, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies who can't resist the generous display of bright scarlet flowers. We have seen Gulf Frittelary sipping on the flowers, then flitting over to nearby Passiflora vines to lay their eggs.

This is a good plant choice if you are looking for masses of color over an extended season. The plant colonizes large areas by sending out root sprouts and can become invasive when conditions are favorable. The unripe fruit of the plant is edible, much like okra. Ripe fruit is readily eaten by wildlife.

Several cultivars are available - one nice selection also has variegated leaves. The plant freezes in winter but returns each year from thick, yellow roots. Turk's cap is deer resistant.

Texas Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*)

This attractive small tree is a harbinger of a Hill Country Spring, with electric pink flowers covering its bare branches, followed by shiny dark-green leaves. Fall color is a clear, sulphur yellow. Texas redbud is very drought tolerant and is often found on solid rock outcroppings. It generally lives about 35 years, and at maturity, becomes multi-trunked. "[Traveller](#)", our patented cultivar, is a weeping form of the tree.

Texas redbud needs protection from deer, as they will browse new growth.

Native Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)

Usually found as a large tree in/about waterways or floodplains, this widespread tree produces the edible nut of commerce. Pecan trees are fast growing and yields a beautiful wood for cabinetry and furniture use. The wild form produces a smaller nut that is often considered tastier than commercial varieties. The tree yields an abundant crop every 2-3 years.

Pecans make excellent shade trees but are not a good choice for small city or suburban yards. If planted near driveways, sticky residue emitted from summer through fall can coat car finishes and windows. In addition, their leaves and husks need to be raked and disposed of as they will retard the growth of plants growing beneath them.

Container-grown pecans can be planted at any time of the year but care should be taken to make sure that the persistent tap root is not being strangled by roots circling the pot. Carefully orient the tap root to the bottom of the dug hole for best results.

Native pecans have bitter leaves, making them unattractive to browsing deer.
