

# The Best Trees for Winter Months

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The beauty of trees in winter stands out as the first snow glistens on the bare branches of deciduous trees or on the billowy evergreen boughs of firs. Here are my picks for the best winter trees in several categories:

## Winter Interest in Color and Texture of Bark

**The Paperbark Maple**, *Acer griseum*, is a vase shape tree with multiple trunks and graceful branching. In winter the very tactile and mottled bark dominates the view. When two or three years old, the paperbark maple develops peeling bark, cinnamon in color with orange to bronze shading. Slow growing, this Chinese tree, matures at 20'-25'H x 20'-30'W. It grows well in full sun to part shade and needs well-drained soil. To show off its colorful bark, plant it near the house where it can be admired.

**The Coral Bark Maple**, *Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku', is a lovely garden tree year 'round. In winter its signature color of bark and branches intensifies to a salmon color. In the brightness of full sun, this small tree, 12'-20'H x 12'-15'W, stands out against the white of newly fallen snow. Plant this tree so it can create an appealing window vista.

## Late Season Bloom and Scent

We usually associate bloom and scent with spring, but there are some trees that bloom in the cold of winter and fill the wintry air with sweet aromas.

**Witch hazel**, *Hamamelis x intermedia*, blooms with crimped red, cream, yellow or apricot petals in late winter. This long-lived shrub-like tree ranges in height from 15'-25' but is easily maintained as a small upright V shape by removing older stems. It thrives in all situations of light, soil type, and soil moisture. Fruiting in the autumn, it is the only North American tree with flowers, ripe fruit and next year's leaf buds on branches at the same time. Plant this specimen where you can see its bright blooms and smell its delightful scent.

**Serviceberry, or Shadblow**, *Amelanchier canadensis*, is a small native tree with distinctive late winter flowers. It blooms in late winter before it leafs out just as the shad are running in streams. Its white flowers develop in upright sprays filling the tree with a white aura. A small, multiple stemmed tree 15'-20'H, it grows best in full to part shade along streams but not in areas subject to flooding. In June and July, its blue-black fruits are gobbled up by cedar waxwings, mockingbirds, robins, catbirds, orioles and thrushes.



Paperbark Maple,  
*Acer griseum*



Coral Bark Maple  
*Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku'



Witch Hazel  
*Hamamelis x intermedia*