

Trees and shrubs serve many functions

By ED HUTCHISON
Special to the Record-Eagle

Think about it — bread can be used for toast, sandwiches, stuffing, in meat loaf and so on — and when it is stale, tossed to the birds. Bread is versatile. It earns its place in the home. Can the same be said of the trees and shrubs in your yard?

With time to garden short and space limited, it makes good sense to choose trees and shrubs that pay their way by delivering beauty year-around. Plants of this ilk need not be more expensive than a one-season charmer. Finding them takes a bit of planning before going to the nursery. Consider these points if a new tree or shrub is in your plans this spring — and if you want something more than a plant with leaves in the summer:

Flowers are always welcome, especially if they burst open before leaves, or the season, are far along. For early season color, choose the forsythia as it is the most dependable of the spring bloomers and has by far the richest color — most varieties are a deep, golden yellow and the blooms are usually out by mid-April in this area.

Many gardeners consider the forsythia “done” when blooms disappear. This is because the shrub can grow unwieldy and in a few years, be an unattractive mass of branches going every which way. Light pruning each spring after flowering, following its natural shape, results in a shrub that is a lovely accent in the landscape with medium green leaves all summer, some autumn color and an attractive structure in the winter. Point is: Don't neglect to prune it lightly each year or it will quickly become a mess.

Choose a hybrid over a standard variety for a plant with the best manners and dependability. A locally owned nursery is your best bet in locating a hybrid forsythia. Great choices because of cold hardiness and nice growth habits include: “Meadowlark,” “Happy Centennial,” “Northern Gold,” “Northern Sun” and “Sunrise.”

Rhododendron and azalea are also wonderful spring-blooming shrubs. They are more fussy than the forsythia to get established but once at home, can be counted on to bloom each spring and provide a nice shrub — typically an evergreen one — when blossoms are not out. Many types are available and in cold weather states, the PJM rhododendron is harder than the large-leaf type. Some azaleas are especially good in cold weather. Work with a local nursery to get the best one for your area as these shrubs are expensive and slow growing — so it makes sense to get it right the first time.

Several spring-flowering trees are outstanding for spring color and shape and overall beauty of the tree the rest of the year. Two (and probably more) are iffy in the dependability or utility departments.

The best: Crabapple, Eastern redbud, dogwood and ornamental pear. The iffy ones: Magnolia and Amelanchier (also known as serviceberry and shadbush). Here's why:

Crabapple, redbud and dogwood can be counted on to bloom each spring. Even when the winter is cold and a few freezes come in about blooming time, they will usually blossom unless the cold zaps them at an extremely sensi-

tive point of flower bud growth.

Redbud is especially lovely because of its tiny, shell pink flowers that open along the branches before leaves are out. Crab and dogwood blooms open as the leaves are opening. Only a few varieties of redbud are available, in sharp contrast to the many choices in flower color, tree shape and overall size in the crabapple and to a lesser extent, dogwood. The branch structure and leaf color of these trees are pleasing in the summer as well.

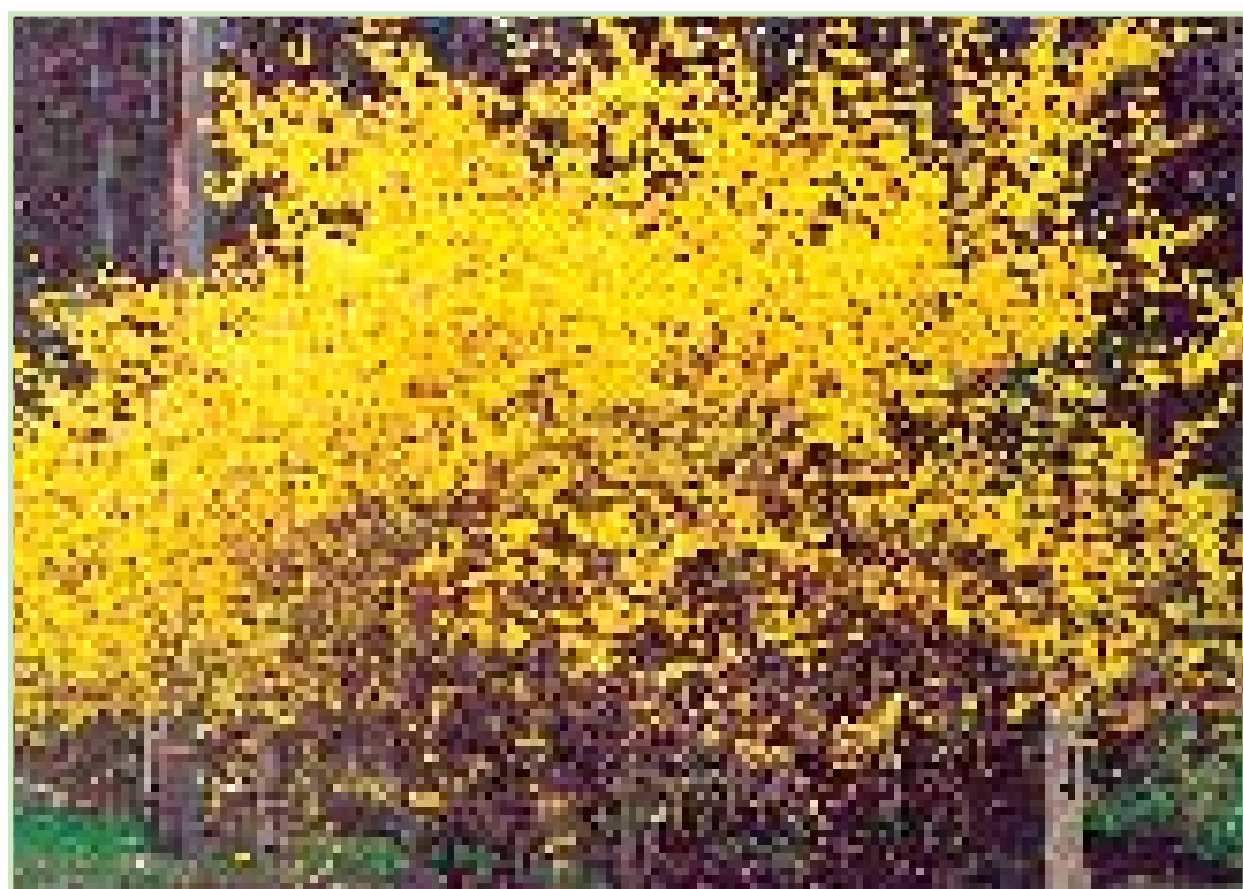
Many varieties of dogwood bring welcome color to the winter landscape because of their bright cherry red fruit, which persists, on the tree well into March.

Ornamental pear has become very popular because it blooms heavily each spring, filling the branches with creamy white blossoms. The shape is compact and dense, somewhat of a vase-shape. This is a good tree for small lots because it stays compact compared to many other trees. It is also known as Bradford pear.

The magnolia is a magnificent tree all year long for its shape, bark color, leaf color and a number of other attributes. It is also outstanding in the spring with its white or pink blossoms. Only

problem is that the flower buds are very susceptible to mid-spring freezes. All it takes is a few hours of cold on a spring night to kill the buds and there are no additional flower buds until the next year. Still, the tree is an ideal one for its other attributes.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Amelanchier. While it blooms much more dependably than the magnolia, the overall shape is not as pleasing. The tree tends to have a very open, vase-like shape. It is a good tree for the forest, but not a specimen tree for the yard because of its loose shape. The flowers are nice enough, white, but small and they fill much of the upper crown of the tree.



Photos by Ed Hutchison

Left, the Bradford pear is popular because of its prolific blooming habit and compact shape. Above, the forsythia is the king, of sorts, of spring-flowering shrubs because it is easy to grow and so generous with its bright yellow blossoms very early in spring.



East Bay Tree Farm
by appointment

Your local source for specimen-sized trees

- Oak
- Maple
- Shadblow
- Linden
- Pear
- Birch

Sizes 3"-7" caliper

High quality shade and ornamental trees selected and grown by an experienced landscape architect

6699 Bates Road (corner of Brackett)
Williamsburg, MI 49690
(231) 938-0215

5/10-649834-LG

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS IN PATIOS & SPAS

Phillips Energy All Patio Furniture ON SALE!



homecrest

5 Piece Palm Bay Dining Set **\$995**
Reg. \$1280

Large Selection Many Styles and Colors Available

20TH ANNUAL SUMMER GARDEN WALK THE FRIENDLY GARDEN CLUB of TRAVERSE CITY Federated Garden Club of Michigan

GARDENING IN THE HILLS



Thursday, July 18th, 2002
Noon to 8 p.m. - Rain or Shine
Advance Donation - \$5
Day of Walk - \$7

Tickets available from Sponsors and *Outlets starting June 1st

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND OUTLETS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Apple Hollow Nursery | Mary's Plant Place |
| Barker Creek Nursery | McGough's, Inc. |
| Bellwether Herbs & Flowers | Northport Nursery |
| Breeze Hill Greenhouse | Pine Hill Nursery |
| Brian Zimmerman Landscaping, Inc. | Plantmasters of Suttons Bay |
| Cedar Hedge Gardens | Sweet Meadow Farm Gardens |
| Cherryland Floral | The Cottage Garden |
| Crystal Gardens | Traverse City Visitors Center* |
| Dobias Landscaping & Garden Center | Tom's Food Markets |
| Dove Song of Interlochen* | Village Wine Shoppe (Blue Goat)* |
| Garden Goods | Wallins Farm Nursery |
| Hall's Greenhouse | Waterscapes Unlimited |
| Hibbards Flower & Wedding Center | Wild Birds Unlimited* |
| LaCross Landscaping, Inc. | Wildflowers |
| Manitou Gardens | Wilson's Antiques* |
| | Zimmerman's Landscaping |

5/10-649845-LG

Retractable Awnings Free Local Installation



Frigerio USA

For the best price & service in Northern Michigan

ADVANCED inc.

AWNINGS • UPHOLSTERY • CANVAS

(231) 938-2233 or 1-800-953-2288

Look for us under the red canopies. 1.5 miles East on M-72, Acme.

lg5/10 648839

COAST SPAS HOME THEATRE



Special Pricing NOW!

The Ultimate Backyard Entertainment Centre!

Features:

- LCD Retractable TV, VCR
- Sony® AM-FM CD
- Sony® 6.5" 260W Speakers
- 74 Therapy Jets
- Twin Waterfalls
- Volcano Jet • Twin Ice Buckets
- Waterproof Floating Remote
- Fibre-Optic Lighting



The Sony® Spa

Features:

- Sony® AM-FM CD 60W
- 40 Jets
- Fibre-Optic Lighting
- Thermal Cover
- Stainless Steel Oversized Jets
- Twin Waterfalls • 14 Hp
- Waterproof Floating Remote Control

Traverse City
Grand Traverse Mall
935-4428
next to Target
Mon.-Sat. 10-9; Sun. 11-6

Phillips Energy Inc. GT Mall
Cherryland Mall
S. Airport Rd.
www.phillipsenergy.com

Traverse City
989 S. Airport Road
929-1396
Mon.-Fri. 8-5; Sat. 10-5

lg5/10 648842