



Serviceberry

(commonly called Sarvis in NC)

Amelanchier arborea

Location: The serviceberry tree is found throughout NC but develops the best on mountain slopes.

Bark: It is smooth on the branches and upper part of the stem. It breaks into shallow fissures or grooves on the short trunk. The bark is thin and has an ashy gray color.

Leaves: The leaves alternate along the slender stalked stem. They are oval shaped (ovate), pointed, and finely toothed. They are 2 to 4 inches long and are purplish-brown until nearly mature when they turn a light green. The young leaves are covered with scattered silky hairs.

Flowers: The flowers are white in standing or drooping clusters. They appear before or with the leaves so that the flowers are easily seen in a leafless or budding forest.

Fruit: The fruit is sweet, rounded and 1/3 to 1/2 inch in diameter. It is dark purple to black when ripe, usually in early June, and it is edible (can be eaten). Most birds and animals of the forest eat the serviceberry fruit.

Wood Type: Hardwood. The wood is heavy, extremely hard, strong, close-grained, and dark brown.

Mature Height: 2 feet to 50 feet high

Mature Diameter: 1/2 foot to 1 1/2 feet, with a rather narrow, rounded top

Uses: Furniture and turnery (products made on a lathe)

Interesting Fact: A common name for the serviceberry is “shadbush”. Early settlers gave it that name because it blooms in April with the shad (a fish) runs.

Reference: Holmes, J. S., & Holmes, J. S. (2015). *Common forest trees of North Carolina: A pocket manual*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Forest Service.