

# Checklist of Illinois Native Trees

Jay C. Hayek, Extension Forestry Specialist  
 Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences



Updated May 2019

This Technical Forestry Bulletin serves as a checklist of Illinois native trees, both angiosperms (hardwoods) and gymnosperms (conifers). Nearly every species listed in the following tables<sup>†</sup> attains tree-sized stature, which is generally defined as having a (i) single stem with a trunk diameter greater than or equal to 3 inches, measured at 4.5 feet above ground level, (ii) well-defined crown of foliage, and (iii) total vertical height greater than or equal to 13 feet (Little 1979). Based on currently accepted nomenclature and excluding most minor varieties and all nothospecies, or hybrids, there are approximately 184± known native trees and tree-sized shrubs found in Illinois (Table 1).

Nomenclature used throughout this bulletin follows the *Integrated Taxonomic Information System* —the ITIS database utilizes real-time access to the most current and accepted taxonomy based on scientific consensus. Preferred common names and spelling, withstanding several obligatory changes, adhere to Little (1979). State threatened and endangered species status corresponds to data published by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board (2015).

Tree species prevalence (Table 2), or commonness, and county distribution generally follows Iverson et al. (1989) and Mohlenbrock (2002). Additional sources of data with respect to species prevalence and county distribution include Mohlenbrock and Ladd (1978), INHS (2011), and USDA's *The Plant Database* (2012).

**Table 2.** Species prevalence (Source: Iverson et al. 1989).

- Common** — widely distributed with high abundance.
- Occasional** — common in localized patches.
- Uncommon** — localized distribution or sparse.
- Rare** — rarely found and sparse.

Basic highlights of this tree checklist include the listing of 29 native hawthorns (*Crataegus*), 21 native oaks (*Quercus*), 11 native willows (*Salix*), 10 native hickories (*Carya*), eight native conifers, and seven native maples (*Acer*). As of May 2015, there are seventeen native tree species in Illinois listed as “endangered” and six native species listed as “threatened” (IESPB 2015).

**Table 1.** List of native trees and tree-sized shrubs, arranged alphabetically by genus, found in Illinois.

Scientific Name (Accepted Binomial)	Preferred Common Name & Spelling	Plant Family / Synonym	Prevalence in Illinois	County Distribution	Threatened & Endangered (state status)
<i>Acer floridanum</i>	Florida maple	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	uncommon	4	—
<i>Acer negundo</i>	boxelder	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	common	102	—
<i>Acer nigrum</i>	black maple	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	common	40	—
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	red maple	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	common	39	—
<i>Acer rubrum</i> var. <i>drummondii</i>	Drummond red maple	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	uncommon	13	—
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	silver maple	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	common	102	—
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	sugar maple	Sapindaceae (syn: Aceraceae)	common	95	—
<i>Aesculus flava</i>	yellow buckeye	Sapindaceae (syn: Hippocastanaceae)	rare	1	—
<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	Ohio buckeye	Sapindaceae (syn: Hippocastanaceae)	occasional	65	—
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	red buckeye	Sapindaceae (syn: Hippocastanaceae)	rare	7	—
<i>Alnus incana</i> ssp. <i>rugosa</i>	speckled alder	Betulaceae	rare	6	endangered

**Table 1.** cont. (*Alnus serrulata* — *Cornus rugosa*)

Scientific Name (Accepted Binomial)	Preferred Common Name & Spelling	Plant Family / Synonym	Prevalence in Illinois	County Distribution	Threatened & Endangered (state status)
<i>Alnus serrulata</i>	hazel alder	Betulaceae	occasional	10	—
<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	downy serviceberry	Rosaceae	occasional	67	—
<i>Amelanchier interior</i>	inland serviceberry	Rosaceae	rare	3	threatened
<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Allegheny serviceberry	Rosaceae	uncommon	16	—
<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	roundleaf serviceberry	Rosaceae	rare	4	endangered
<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	devils-walkingstick	Araliaceae	occasional	14	—
<i>Asimina triloba</i>	pawpaw	Annonaceae	common	80	—
<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>	yellow birch	Betulaceae	rare	6	endangered
<i>Betula nigra</i>	river birch	Betulaceae	common	62	—
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	paper birch	Betulaceae	uncommon	6	—
<i>Betula populifolia</i>	gray birch	Betulaceae	rare	5	—
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American hornbeam	Betulaceae	common	72	—
<i>Carya aquatica</i>	water hickory	Juglandaceae	uncommon	7	threatened
<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	bitternut hickory	Juglandaceae	common	102	—
<i>Carya glabra</i>	pignut hickory	Juglandaceae	common	67	—
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	pecan	Juglandaceae	occasional	51	—
<i>Carya laciniosa</i>	shellbark hickory	Juglandaceae	occasional	41	—
<i>Carya ovalis</i>	red hickory	Juglandaceae	common	45	—
<i>Carya ovata</i>	shagbark hickory	Juglandaceae	common	102	—
<i>Carya pallida</i>	sand hickory	Juglandaceae	rare	3	endangered
<i>Carya texana</i>	black hickory	Juglandaceae	occasional	27	—
<i>Carya tomentosa</i>	mockernut hickory	Juglandaceae	occasional	73	—
<i>Castanea dentata</i>	American chestnut	Fagaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	northern catalpa	Bignoniaceae	occasional	42	—
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	sugarberry	Cannabaceae (syn: Ulmaceae)	common	34	—
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	common hackberry	Cannabaceae (syn: Ulmaceae)	common	99	—
<i>Celtis tenuifolia</i>	Georgia hackberry	Cannabaceae (syn: Ulmaceae)	occasional	18	—
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	eastern redbud	Fabaceae	common	88	—
<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	yellowwood	Fabaceae	rare	2	endangered
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	alternate-leaf dogwood	Cornaceae	uncommon	34	—
<i>Cornus drummondii</i>	roughleaf dogwood	Cornaceae	common	78	—
<i>Cornus florida</i>	flowering dogwood	Cornaceae	common	55	—
<i>Cornus foemina</i>	stiff dogwood	Cornaceae	occasional	16	—
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	gray dogwood	Cornaceae	common	88	—
<i>Cornus rugosa</i>	roundleaf dogwood	Cornaceae	uncommon	11	—

**Table 1.** cont. (*Cornus sericea* — *Fraxinus nigra*)

Scientific Name (Accepted Binomial)	Preferred Common Name & Spelling	Plant Family / Synonym	Prevalence in Illinois	County Distribution	Threatened & Endangered (state status)
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	red-osier dogwood	Cornaceae	occasional	41	—
<i>Crataegus calpodendron</i>	pear hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	32	—
<i>Crataegus chrysocarpa</i>	fireberry hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Crataegus coccinea</i>	scarlet hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	2	—
<i>Crataegus coccinioides</i>	Kansas hawthorn	Rosaceae	uncommon	3	—
<i>Crataegus collina</i>	hillside hawthorn	Roseaceae	rare	2	—
<i>Crataegus corusca</i>	shiningbranch hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Crataegus crus-galli</i>	cockspur hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	73	—
<i>Crataegus disperma</i>	spreading hawthorn	Rosaceae	uncommon	16	—
<i>Crataegus dispessa</i>	mink hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	2	—
<i>Crataegus dodgei</i>	Dodge hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Crataegus fecunda</i>	fruitful hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	2	—
<i>Crataegus flabellata</i>	fanleaf hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	n/a	—
<i>Crataegus holmesiana</i>	Holmes hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	12	—
<i>Crataegus intricata</i>	Biltmore hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	3	—
<i>Crataegus lucorum</i>	grove hawthorn	Rosaceae	uncommon	4	—
<i>Crataegus macrosperma</i>	bigfruit hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	6	—
<i>Crataegus margarettae</i>	Margarett hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	16	—
<i>Crataegus marshallii</i>	parsley hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	downy hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	78	—
<i>Crataegus neobushii</i>	Bush hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	2	—
<i>Crataegus nitida</i>	glossy hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	3	—
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	Washington hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	8	—
<i>Crataegus pratensis</i>	prairie hawthorn	Rosaceae	uncommon	2	—
<i>Crataegus pruinosa</i>	frosted hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	26	—
<i>Crataegus punctata</i>	dotted hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	33	—
<i>Crataegus schuettei</i>	Schuette hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Crataegus spathulata</i>	littlehip hawthorn	Rosaceae	rare	2	—
<i>Crataegus succulenta</i>	fleshy hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	18	—
<i>Crataegus viridis</i>	green hawthorn	Rosaceae	occasional	23	—
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	common persimmon	Ebenaceae	occasional	65	—
<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	American beech	Fagaceae	occasional	23	—
<i>Forestiera acuminata</i>	swamp-privet	Oleaceae	rare	34	—
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	white ash	Oleaceae	common	95	—
<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>	black ash	Oleaceae	occasional	27	—

**Table 1.** cont. (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica* — *Populus grandidentata*)

Scientific Name (Accepted Binomial)	Preferred Common Name & Spelling	Plant Family / Synonym	Prevalence in Illinois	County Distribution	Threatened & Endangered (state status)
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	green ash	Oleaceae	common	92	—
<i>Fraxinus profunda</i>	pumpkin ash	Oleaceae	occasional	19	—
<i>Fraxinus quadrangulata</i>	blue ash	Oleaceae	occasional	50	—
<i>Gleditsia aquatica</i>	waterlocust	Fabaceae	rare	15	—
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	honeylocust	Fabaceae	common	99	—
<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	Kentucky coffeetree	Fabaceae	occasional	69	—
<i>Halesia carolina</i>	Carolina silverbell	Styracaceae	rare	2	endangered
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	witch-hazel	Hamamelidaceae	occasional	23	—
<i>Ilex decudua</i>	possumhaw	Aquifoliaceae	occasional	39	—
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American holly	Aquifoliaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	common winterberry	Aquifoliaceae	occasional	19	—
<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	butternut	Juglandaceae	uncommon	67	—
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	black walnut	Juglandaceae	common	101	—
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	eastern redcedar	Cupressaceae	common	98	—
<i>Larix laricina</i>	tamarack	Pinaceae	uncommon	3	threatened
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	sweetgum	Altingiaceae (syn: Hamamelidaceae)	common	29	—
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	yellow-poplar	Magnoliaceae	common	27	—
<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	cucumbertree	Magnoliaceae	rare	6	—
<i>Malus angustifolia</i>	southern crabapple	Rosaceae	rare	3	endangered
<i>Malus coronaria</i>	sweet crabapple	Rosaceae	occasional	29	—
<i>Malus ioensis</i>	prairie crabapple	Rosaceae	common	101	—
<i>Morus rubra</i>	red mulberry	Moraceae	common	90	—
<i>Nyssa aquatica</i>	water tupelo	Nyssaceae	occasional	8	—
<i>Nyssa biflora</i>	swamp tupelo	Nyssaceae	very rare	1	—
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	blackgum	Nyssaceae	occasional	33	—
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	eastern hophornbeam	Betulaceae	common	102	—
<i>Pinus banksiana</i>	jack pine	Pinaceae	rare	5	endangered
<i>Pinus echinata</i>	shortleaf pine	Pinaceae	rare	2	endangered
<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	red pine	Pinaceae	rare	3	endangered
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	eastern white pine	Pinaceae	occasional	9	—
<i>Planera aquatica</i>	water-elm	Ulmaceae	uncommon	5	threatened
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	sycamore	Platanaceae	common	102	—
<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	balsam poplar	Salicaceae	rare	4	endangered
<i>Populus deltoides</i>	eastern cottonwood	Salicaceae	common	94	—
<i>Populus grandidentata</i>	bigtooth aspen	Salicaceae	occasional	46	—

**Table 1.** cont. (*Populus heterophylla* — *Rhus copallinum*)

Scientific Name (Accepted Binomial)	Preferred Common Name & Spelling	Plant Family / Synonym	Prevalence in Illinois	County Distribution	Threatened & Endangered (state status)
<i>Populus heterophylla</i>	swamp cottonwood	Salicaceae	occasional	21	—
<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	quaking aspen	Salicaceae	occasional	37	—
<i>Prunus americana</i>	American plum	Rosaceae	occasional	88	—
<i>Prunus angustifolia</i>	Chickasaw plum	Rosaceae	occasional	33	—
<i>Prunus hortulana</i>	hortulan plum	Rosaceae	occasional	50	—
<i>Prunus mexicana</i>	Mexican plum	Rosaceae	rare	3	—
<i>Prunus nigra</i>	Canada plum	Rosaceae	occasional	11	—
<i>Prunus pensylvanica</i>	pin cherry	Rosaceae	uncommon	15	—
<i>Prunus rivularis</i>	creek plum	Rosaceae	occasional	18	—
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	black cherry	Rosaceae	common	102	—
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	chokecherry	Rosaceae	occasional	53	—
<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>	common hoptree	Rutaceae	occasional	85	—
<i>Quercus alba</i>	white oak	Fagaceae	common	102	—
<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	swamp white oak	Fagaceae	occasional	62	—
<i>Quercus coccinea</i>	scarlet oak	Fagaceae	occasional	13	—
<i>Quercus ellipsoidalis</i>	northern pin oak	Fagaceae	occasional	18	—
<i>Quercus falcata</i>	southern red oak	Fagaceae	occasional	20	—
<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	shingle oak	Fagaceae	common	90	—
<i>Quercus lyrata</i>	overcup oak	Fagaceae	occasional	27	—
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	bur oak	Fagaceae	common	102	—
<i>Quercus marilandica</i>	blackjack oak	Fagaceae	occasional	56	—
<i>Quercus michauxii</i>	swamp chestnut oak	Fagaceae	occasional	19	—
<i>Quercus montana</i>	chestnut oak	Fagaceae	uncommon	4	threatened
<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	chinkapin oak	Fagaceae	occasional	85	—
<i>Quercus pagoda</i>	cherrybark oak	Fagaceae	occasional	9	—
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	pin oak	Fagaceae	common	78	—
<i>Quercus phellos</i>	willow oak	Fagaceae	uncommon	5	threatened
<i>Quercus prinoides</i>	dwarf chinkapin oak	Fagaceae	rare	1	—
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	northern red oak	Fagaceae	common	96	—
<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	Shumard oak	Fagaceae	occasional	21	—
<i>Quercus stellata</i>	post oak	Fagaceae	common	56	—
<i>Quercus texana</i>	Nuttall oak	Fagaceae	rare	1	endangered
<i>Quercus velutina</i>	black oak	Fagaceae	common	102	—
<i>Rhamnus caroliniana</i>	Carolina buckthorn	Rhamnaceae	uncommon	10	—
<i>Rhus copallinum</i>	winged sumac	Anacardiaceae	common	52	—

**Table 1.** cont. (*Rhamnus caroliniana* — *Zanthoxylum americanum*)

Scientific Name (Accepted Binomial)	Preferred Common Name & Spelling	Plant Family / Synonym	Prevalence in Illinois	County Distribution	Threatened & Endangered (state status)
<i>Rhus glabra</i>	smooth sumac	Anacardiaceae	common	102	—
<i>Rhus typhina</i>	staghorn sumac	Anacardiaceae	occasional	27	—
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	black locust	Fabaceae	common	88	—
<i>Salix amygdaloides</i>	peachleaf willow	Salicaceae	occasional	57	—
<i>Salix bebbiana</i>	Bebb willow	Salicaceae	occasional	11	—
<i>Salix caroliniana</i>	coastal plain willow	Salicaceae	uncommon	13	—
<i>Salix discolor</i>	pussy willow	Salicaceae	occasional	44	—
<i>Salix eriocephala</i>	Missouri River willow	Salicaceae	rare	7	—
<i>Salix exigua</i>	sandbar willow	Salicaceae	common	96	—
<i>Salix lucida</i>	shining willow	Salicaceae	uncommon	8	—
<i>Salix myricoides</i>	bayberry willow	Salicaceae	uncommon	17	—
<i>Salix nigra</i>	black willow	Salicaceae	common	102	—
<i>Salix sericea</i>	silky willow	Salicaceae	occasional	24	—
<i>Salix serissima</i>	autumn willow	Salicaceae	rare	2	endangered
<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	sassafras	Lauraceae	common	77	—
<i>Sideroxylon lanuginosum</i>	gum bumelia	Sapotaceae	rare	3	endangered
<i>Sideroxylon lycioides</i>	buckthorn bumelia	Sapotaceae	rare	6	—
<i>Sorbus americana</i>	American mountain-ash	Rosaceae	rare	1	endangered
<i>Staphylea trifolia</i>	American bladdernut	Staphyleaceae	Common	102	—
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	baldcypress	Cupressaceae	uncommon	14	—
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	northern white-cedar	Cupressaceae	uncommon	5	—
<i>Tilia americana</i>	American basswood	Malvaceae (syn: Tiliaceae)	occasional	92	—
<i>Tilia americana</i> var. <i>heterophylla</i>	white basswood	Malvaceae (syn: Tiliaceae)	rare	4	endangered
<i>Ulmus alata</i>	winged elm	Ulmaceae	common	22	—
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	American elm	Ulmaceae	common	102	—
<i>Ulmus rubra</i>	slippery elm	Ulmaceae	common	102	—
<i>Ulmus thomasi</i>	rock elm	Ulmaceae	rare	10	endangered
<i>Vaccinium arboreum</i>	huckleberry	Ericaceae	occasional	12	—
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	nannyberry	Adoxaceae (syn: Caprifoliaceae)	occasional	38	—
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	blackhaw	Adoxaceae (syn: Caprifoliaceae)	occasional	84	—
<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	rusty blackhaw	Adoxaceae (syn: Caprifoliaceae)	occasional	20	—
<i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i>	prickly-ash	Rutaceae	occasional	69	—

† Adapted from Iverson et al. (1989) and K.R. Robertson (n.d).

**References:**

IESB (Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board). 2015. Checklist of endangered and threatened animals and plants of Illinois. Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board, Springfield, IL. 17 p.

INHS (Illinois Natural History Survey). 2011. *Vascular Plant Collection Database* (<http://ellipse.inhs.uiuc.edu:591/INHSCollections/plantsearch.html>, 18 April 2011). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ITIS (Integrated Taxonomic Information System). 2019. *Online Database* (<http://www.itis.gov>, 5 May 2019). Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Iverson, L.R., R.L. Oliver, D.P. Tucker, P.G. Risser, C.D. Burnett, and R.G. Rayburn. 1989. The forest resources of Illinois: an atlas and analysis of spatial and temporal trends. Illinois Natural History Survey Special Publication 11. 181 p.

Iverson, L.R., D. Ketzner, and J. Karnes. 1999. Illinois Plant Information Network. Database at (<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/data/il/ilpin/>). Illinois Natural History Survey and USDA Forest Service.

Little, E.L. 1979. Checklist of United States Trees (Native and Naturalized). Agriculture Handbook No. 541. USDA Forest Service, Washington, D.C. 375 p.

Mohlenbrock, R.H. 2002. Vascular flora of Illinois. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL. 490 p.

Mohlenbrock, R.H. and D.M. Ladd. 1978. Distribution of Illinois vascular plants. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL. 282 p.

Robertson, K.R. (n.d.). *List of Woody Plants Native or Naturalized in Illinois* (<http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/~kenr/woody.html>, 14 April 2011). Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

USDA, NRCS. 2019. *The PLANTS Database* (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 5 May 2019). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

**Useful Websites:****Maps of Native Trees and Plants in Illinois**

<https://www.plantmaps.com/illinois-native-plants-and-trees-maps.php>

**Distribution of Illinois Native Plants**

<https://www.inhs.illinois.edu/data/plantdb/>

**Illinois Plant Information Network (ILPIN)**

<http://nrs.fs.fed.us/data/il/ilpin/>

**About the author:**

Jay C. Hayek, Extension Forestry Specialist, Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mr. Hayek also teaches NRES 302—Dendrology at the University of Illinois.

**Follow us on social media:**

@uieforestry



@IllinoisExtensionForestry

**Recommended citation:**

Hayek, J.C. 2019. Checklist of Illinois Native Trees. Univ. of Illinois Extension Tech. Forestry Bull. NRES-102. Urbana, IL. 7 p.

© 2019 University of Illinois. All Rights Reserved.

Information provided within this bulletin is for informational purposes only. Reference to specific external websites, trade names, commercial products, companies, or individuals does not imply endorsement by University of Illinois Extension, nor is discrimination intended against any that are not listed.

The Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and Extension Forestry at the University of Illinois would like to thank and acknowledge the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for Extension forestry program funding.

**I ILLINOIS**  
Extension

University of Illinois • U.S. Department of Agriculture • Local Extension Councils Cooperating

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.