

Salt Tolerant Plants

(★ denotes plants that are especially salt tolerant)

(Δ denotes plants that are especially tolerant of occasional salt flooding)

(◇ denotes plants that tolerate wet conditions and/or occasional brackish flooding)

Trees

Celtis occidentalis - Common Hackberry Δ

- native
- not the prettiest tree, but has an interesting habit and is very tolerant of poor soil, drought, occasional floods, wind, and urban conditions
- beneficial to native wildlife
- 40-60' tall and wide, older with age, fast

Diospyros virginiana - Common Persimmon Δ

- native
- known for its attractive, edible fruit
- moderately slow to 35-60' tall by 20-35' wide
- can get good fall color
- tolerates sandy soil, tidal flooding, wind, and beachfront conditions

Ginkgo biloba - Ginkgo or Maidenhair Tree

- living fossil
- great fall color
- male vs. female
- 50-80' tall by 30-40' wide, variable
- long lived, tolerant of wind, salt, occasional flooding, and nuclear warfare

Gleditsia triacanthos - Thornless Common Honeylocust ★

- native
- grows quickly to 30-70' tall with equal width, open spreading crown, light enough to grow grass under
- drought and very salt tolerant, beachfront and occasional tidal flooding

Juniperus virginiana - Eastern Redcedar ★ Δ

- native, evergreen blue-green foliage
- strong wood
- females have attractive blue fruit
- slowly to 40-50' tall by 8-20'
- long-lived, tolerant of drought, marsh, sand, salt, tidal flooding, and beachfront conditions

Magnolia grandiflora - Southern Magnolia

- native, evergreen
- beautiful fragrant white flowers in late spring to early summer
- one of my favorite trees in other people's gardens, messy
- 60-80' tall by 30-50' wide, slow to medium
- tolerant of wind, occasional salt flooding, full sun to partial shade, long-lived

Magnolia virginiana - Sweetbay Magnolia ◇

- native, deciduous to evergreen depending on variety
- creamy white fragrant flowers in late spring
- not as messy as So. Magnolia
- moderately fast, variable size 20-60 tall
- will grow in sun to a fair amount of shade, tolerant of brackish flooding

Hardy Palms

- *Rhapidophyllum hystrix* - Needle Palm
- *Sabal minor* - Dwarf Palmetto ★
- *Trachycarpus fortunei* - Windmill Palm

Pinus taeda - Loblolly Pine

- native, evergreen
- 60-90' tall, fast
- tolerant of occasional tidal flooding and salt spray, poor and sandy soils

Pinus thunbergii - Japanese Black Pine ★

- dark green foliage on artistically arranged branches, no two grow alike
- 20-40' tall and wide, though variable and can get bigger
- prefers coastal conditions, tolerant of sandy soil, salt spray, and beachfront conditions

Quercus phellos - Willow Oak ★

- native
- small willow-like leaves, variable fall color
- 40-60' tall by 30-40' wide, but larger with considerable age
- tolerant of many conditions including salt, near-beachfront, and occasional flooding

Quercus virginiana - Live Oak ★△

- native, evergreen but drops leaves in spring
- distinctive horizontal branching
- slow to 40-80' tall by 60-100' wide, rarely reaches full size in SE Virginia

- tolerant of sandy soil, occasional tidal flooding, beachfront conditions, and salt spray

Robinia pseudoacacia - Black Locust

- native
- very fragrant, wisteria-like, white flowers in mid-spring
- grows quickly to 30-50' tall by 20-35' wide
- tolerant of salt, sandy soil, and occasional flooding

Taxodium distichum - Bald Cypress ◇

- native
- 50-70' tall by 20-30' wide
- bright green needled growth goes russet in fall
- extremely tolerant of flooding soils, brackish water, also normal soil, extremely wind tolerant
- cypress knees

Vitex agnus-castus - Vitex, Chaste Tree

- small tree or large shrub depending on how it is treated
- blue flowers in early summer, deadhead for fall bloom
- bees love it
- interesting history
- grows moderately fast to 15 tall and wide, or more
- very drought tolerant, will grow in sand, tolerates beachfront conditions
- NEVER plant *Vitex rotundifolia* (Beach Vitex), very invasive

Shrubs

Aronia melanocarpa - Black Chokeberry ◇

- native
- white flowers in spring, near-black fruit in fall attracts birds, great fall foliage
- 3-6' tall and wide, dwarf selections available
- tolerant of salt, drought, and wet

Baccharis halimifolia - Saltbush, Groundsel Shrub ★△◇

- native
- fleecy white clouds of flowers in late summer
- 5-12' tall and wide, moderate
- tolerant of regular salt flooding, and marshy soils, will also grow in other poor soils

Clethra alnifolia - Clethra, Summersweet, Sweet Pepperbush ◇

- native

- fragrant white flowers in early summer, pink available too, attractive to native pollinators
- nice yellow fall color
- 4-8' tall, can spread wider, makes colonies
- prefers partial shade, in moist to occasionally wet soils, salt tolerant, can grow by marsh edge

Cupressus sempervirens - Italian Blue Cypress

- blue green foliage, evergreen
- grows 20-30 tall by 2-3' wide, should be staked when young
- very drought tolerant, can take beachfront conditions

Eleagnus x ebbingei - Silverberry Eleagnus

- evergreen
- silver foliage
- fragrant ivory flowers in late fall, olive to red fruit, birds like
- grows quickly 8-10' tall and wide
- very drought, salt and sand tolerant, does well in beachfront conditions
- other species also do well in coastal conditions but there is potential invasiveness from this genus

Euonymus fortunei - Wintercreeper Euonymus

- evergreen, usually variegated with several combinations, different winter color
- grow quickly to 4-12" tall depending on variety by several feet wide, will climb if given the opportunity
- will grow in sun or shade, tolerant of dry soils and sand, salt tolerant, does not like swampy soil

Euonymus japonicus - Japanese Euonymus

- evergreen, usually variegated
- grows moderately fast to 6 tall and wide, depending of variety, dwarfs available
- will grow in sun to shade, adaptable to soils, salt, and oceanfront tolerant
- scale insects can be an issue

Hydrangea macrophylla - Bigleaf Hydrangea

- beautiful flowers in late spring to early summer, flower color pH dependent
- grows moderately fast to 4-6' tall and wide depending on variety
- prefers partial shade, thrives in coastal atmospheres, not drought tolerant

Ilex glabra - Inkberry Holly ◇

- native, evergreen
- dark green foliage, black berries

- tolerant of wet soils, flooding, salt, full sun to fair shade

Ilex vomitoria - Yaupon Holly ★△◇

- native, evergreen
- females have red berries
- grows moderately to 15-20' tall by 10' wide, dwarf and weeping forms common
- very adaptable, sun to mod. shade, tolerant of wet or dry, salt spray, and occasional flooding

Juniperus species - Juniper

- evergreen, different foliage colors
- growth habit is size depends on species and cultivars
- tolerant of dry soil, sand, salt spray

Ligustrum lucidum, *L. japonicum* - Waxleaf Ligustrum, Japanese Privet

- evergreen
- white flowers in early summer, fragrant?
- grows quickly to 10-20 tall by less wide depending on species
- full sun to shade, adaptable, tolerant of salt spray, occasional flooding, once established drought tolerant, can take heavy pruning, potential invasiveness, never plant *L. sinense* (Chinese Privet)

Morella cerifera - Wax Myrtle ★△◇

- native, evergreen (except in severe winters)
- females have gray fruit some birds like
- grows moderately to 10-15' tall and wide, can be kept shorter with pruning or limbed up to make a small tree
- full sun to part shade, tolerant of oceanfront conditions, standing water either fresh or brackish

Nerium oleander - Oleander ★

- evergreen, but suffers badly in severe winters
- beautiful flowers in summer, several colors
- in SE Va. only reaches 6-8 tall, larger further south
- very drought tolerant, salt tolerant, heat tolerant, and does well in beachfront conditions
- very poisonous

Opuntia - Prickly Pear Cactus ★

- native (believe it or not)
- large evergreen pads, yellow flowers, burgundy red fruits, edible, thorny
- extremely tolerant of salt and drought

Pittosporum tobira - Japanese Pittosporum, Mockorange ☆

- evergreen, some variegated
- very fragrant white flowers in spring
- grows slowly to 6-8 tall, rarely reaches full size in SE Va., dwarf forms available
- very heat, drought, salt and beachfront tolerant, not tolerant of severe winters, best left for Norfolk and Va. Beach or in a sheltered, yet sunny location

Pyracantha koidzumi and P. coccinea - Pyracantha

- evergreen, white flowers in spring, red to orange berries in fall
- moderately fast 6-18' tall and wide depending on variety, shrub with a vine-like habit
- tolerant of dry soil, occasional flooding

Raphiolepis indica - Indian Hawthorn ☆

- evergreen, white to pink flowers in spring, black fall fruit
- most varieties grow mod. slow to 3-4' tall and wide, larger sizes available
- full to part sun, very drought, heat and salt tolerant, can take beachfront conditions, disease issues

Rosa rugosa ☆

- flowers in late spring through summer, usually hot pink but white and other colors available, attractive rose hips
- very tolerant of salt, sand, heat, and beachfront conditions

Tamarix ramosissima - Tamarix, Saltcedar △

- unusual pink feathery flowers in spring
- blue green foliage
- very tolerant of salt, sand, and beachfront conditions
- invasive in some states

Yucca species ☆

- native evergreen
- tall white flower stalks in early summer
- very drought, salt, sand, and heat tolerant, beachfront

Vines

Campsis radicans - Trumpet Vine △ ◇

- native
- trumpet shaped orange-red flowers in summer
- vigorous and rampant, 30-40' tall or more

- can take occasional flooding and beachfront conditions, late to leaf out, loves heat

Gelsemium sempervirens - Carolina Jessamine ◇

- native
- bright yellow, very fragrant in late March
- evergreen twining vine to 10-20' tall, vigorous
- full sun to pt. shade, can take occasional flooding, beachfront conditions, does not like to get too dry

Lonicera sempervirens - Coral or Trumpet Honeysuckle

- native
- orange red to red flowers have a yellow to orange throat, trumpet shaped and attracts humming birds
- reddish purple new foliage, deciduous in cold winters, semi-evergreen in mild ones
- grows quickly to 10-20' tall
- full sun to shade, more flowers in sun, tolerant of heat and humidity, occasional flooding

Parthenocissus quinquefolia - Virginia Creeper

- native
- new leaves are bronzy green, great fall color purple to red
- extremely vigorous, tolerant of beachfront conditions, sand, salt flooding, tough!

Passiflora incarnata - Purple Passion Vine

- very showy blue flowers in late spring through summer
- vigorous, grows quickly to 30' tall
- full sun to pt. shade, tolerant of beachfront conditions, and occasional flooding

Grasses

Cortaderia selloana - Pampas Grass

- large white plumes in late summer
- light green foliage
- can grow to 8' tall and wide, or more, dwarf forms available
- tolerant of beachfront conditions, sand, and drought

Leymus arenarius - Dune Grass, Lyme Grass ☆

- steely blue foliage
- 3-4' tall and wide
- tolerant of sun to pt. shade, occasional flooding, drought, very salt tolerant
- can be invasive

Miscanthus species - Maiden Grass

- graceful thin foliage (some variegated) and attractive flowers in late summer
- several varieties and sizes available
- tolerant of oceanfront conditions sand and drought, but responds well to good care
- potential invasiveness

Panicum virgatum - Switch Grass

- native
- attractive foliage in several colors, nice plumes
- 3-6' tall
- tolerant of beachfront, sand, full sun, drought, and occasional flood

Spartina patens - Saltmeadow Cordgrass ★△

- native
- bright green foliage in summer, goes golden in fall
- requires regular tidal flooding to thrive, exceptionally salt tolerant
- *S. alterniflora* - Saltmarsh Cordgrass, taller

Perennials

Agapanthus africanus - Lily of the Nile

- bold strap-like foliage
- lt. to dark blue, white flowers in summer
- very tolerant of drought, heat, salt and occasional flooding, not for reg. wet areas

Canna ◇

- bold tropical foliage comes in many colors and variations
- big colorful flowers
- need consistent moisture

Delosperma cooperii - Ice Plant

- fleshy succulent foliage
- bright purple flowers most of the spring summer and into fall
- very drought tolerant

Dianthus gratianopolitanus - Cheddar Pink

- low grower with attractive silvery blue foliage
- magenta, pink, white, to red flowers in late spring, sporadic into summer
- very heat, drought, salt and sand tolerant, needs good drainage

Echinacea purpurea - Purple Coneflowers

- native
- pink flowers in late spring through summer, unusual cones, good food source for birds
- tolerant of occasional flooding

Eryngium aquaticum - Marsh Rattlesnake Master ◇

- southeastern native
- blue sea-holly-like flowers summer into fall, attractive foliage
- 3-4 tall by half as wide
- likes wet feet, including brackish water

Gaillardia - Blanketflower ☆

- native
- colorful summer flowers, oranges red and yellow
- very tolerant of drought, salt, sand and beachfront conditions, occasional flooding
- not tolerant of poor drainage or too much water

Hemerocallis - Daylily ☆

- multiple colors available, easy to grow
- tolerant of beachfront conditions, but respond well to good moisture and care, tolerant of occasional flooding

Hibiscus moscheutos - Common Rose Mallow ◇

- native
- large pink, red to white blooms in late summer
- tolerant of salt, occasional flooding, and moist to wet soils
- late to emerge in spring

Kosteletzkya virginica - Seashore Mallow ☆△◇

- native
- large pink to white flowers in summer
- tolerant of standing brackish water, salt, and flooding

Lavendula stoechas - Spanish or French Lavender

- evergreen foliage is a silvery blue-green, very fragrant
- pale purple flowers in late spring
- tolerant of heat, sand and beachfront conditions, not tolerant of poor drainage, heavy mulch, or very rich soil

Leucanthemum - Becky Daisy

- easy to grow with show white flowers with yellow centers
- tolerant of heat, sand, and beachfront conditions, not tolerant of poor drainage

Limonium carolinianum - Carolina Sea Lavender

- native
- wispy blue/purple flowers in summer
- tolerant of beachfront conditions or marshy soil, very salt tolerant

Nepeta - Catmint

- aromatic silver green foliage
- flower color can be blue, lavender, white to rose
- drought tolerant, attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds - deer resistant

Perovskia atriplicifolia - Russian Sage

- handsome silver foliage and blue flowers
- tolerant of sand, beachfront conditions, and drought

Rosmarinus officinalis - Rosemary ☆

- aromatic edible foliage, blue flowers in winter
- tolerant of beachfront conditions, sand, heat, and drought, not tolerant of poor drainage, and overly rich soil

Rudbeckia fulgida - Blackeyed Susan

- native
- black and gold flowers in summer
- tolerant of beachfront conditions, heat, sand, and drought

Santolina chamaecyparissus - Santolina, Lavender Cotton ☆

- very aromatic foliage can be green or silver, yellow flowers
- very tolerant of heat, drought, sand, salt, and beachfront conditions

Sedum x 'Autumn Joy'

- fleshy, silvery green foliage, pink flowers in late summer, good winter interest
- tolerant of beachfront conditions, drought, sand, and salt
- many other sedums would fit the bill as well

Sempervivum - Hens and Chicks

- unusual fleshy foliage, occasional flowers are bizarre
- tolerant of beachfront conditions, sand, salt, heat and drought, do not overwater or put in really rich soil

Solidago sempervirens - Seaside Goldenrod ☆△

- native
- golden yellow flowers late in summer to early fall

- tolerant of beachfront conditions, heat, drought, sand, and occasional flooding
- *S. canadensis* is also very good

Stachys byzantina - Lamb's Ear

- grown primarily for silvery foliage that is nice to touch
- tolerant of beachfront conditions and sand, not tolerant of poor drainage, and overly rich soil

Symphotrichum species - Aster

- Native
- several species, colorful flowers, usually in late summer or early fall
- tolerant of occasional flooding

Tradescantia pallida - Purple Heart

- grown primarily for its fleshy purple foliage
- small pink flowers
- tolerant of drought, heat, and beachfront conditions

Tulbaghia violacea - Society Garlic

- violet pink flowers in late summer
- attractive foliage, unpleasant aroma
- tolerant of heat, drought, and beachfront conditions

Annuals

Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum - Wax Begonias

- fleshy bronze (sun) or green foliage (shade), white, pink or red flowers

Coreopsis - Coreopsis, Tickseed

- self-seeding annuals, or short lived perennials
- yellow flowers most of the summer

Cosmos bipinnatus - Cosmos

- tall pink, white, purple flowers in summer to fall

Gazania - South African Daisy

- multiple colors, oranges, yellows and whites
- very heat, drought and sand tolerant

Lantana ★

- many color combinations
- heat, drought, sand and beachfront tolerant
- discuss Miss Huff

Portulaca - Purslane, Moss Rose

- low groundcover in multiple colors, fleshy foliage
- very heat, drought, sand and salt tolerant

Senecio cineraria - Dusty Miller

- grown primarily for its silver foliage
- heat, drought, sand and tolerant of beachfront conditions
- sometimes perennial