



SERVICEBERRY *Amelanchier* spp. Medik.



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Approximately seven species of serviceberry or shad bush grow as shrubs or small trees in Maine. Of these, two species—Allegheny serviceberry *Amelanchier laevis* Wieg. and downy serviceberry *Amelanchier arborea* (Michx. f.) Fern.—commonly grow to be small trees 30–40 feet in height and 6 to 8 inches in diameter. Allegheny serviceberry, is the more common of the two. They are both found in open hardwood stands or along the margins of open areas throughout much of the state.

The **bark** of serviceberry is smooth, gray to light violet-brown with darker vertical stripes; older bark is slightly fissured longitudinally and twisted.

The **leaves** of Allegheny serviceberry are half grown at flowering time, and have a reddish or purplish tinge. When downy serviceberry leaves are just unfolding, they are green and densely hairy beneath. Mature leaves of both species are alternate, dark green





Serviceberry buds are long and sharp-pointed; the lateral buds hug the twig.

above and lighter green below, 1½–3 inches long, 1–1½ inches wide, elliptic to ovate with a rounded or heart-shaped base.



The **flowers** are white and sweet-smelling with 5 petals. The serviceberry flowers before other trees and is very easy to spot along the edges of fields and streams in spring.

Serviceberry **fruit** is berry-like, ripens in early summer, is ⅓–½ inch in diameter, and red to dark purple when mature and edible. Serviceberry **twigs** are slender, red-brown and finely hairy when young, becoming smooth as the twigs grow. The buds are long, sharp pointed, reddish or pinkish, and filled with silky hairs.

The **wood** is occasionally used for tool handles, small implements and fishing rods. It is heavy, hard, strong, close-grained and dark brown tinged with red.

