Serviceberry  
(*Amelanchier* sp.)

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Serviceberries (*Amelanchier* sp.) are well known for their fragrant white flower in spring and their reliability as landscape plants. The most popular serviceberry in the trade is probably the eastern or common serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), found in many of the eastern states. This species and several other *Amelanchier* native to North America share their ability to withstand drier garden conditions, making them good candidates for WaterWise gardens. An exception to this is the Allegheny serviceberry (*A. laevis*) which requires moist soil.

According to Wikipedia, the genus is made up of about 20 species native to North America, Europe, or Asia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serviceberry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serviceberry)). All are multistemmed shrubs or small trees, often forming colonies. The fruits are noted as being important as a food source for wildlife. Fall color is generally yellow to red; and the small-sized leaves generally do not require raking.

Our own native is also known as Saskatoon (*A. alnifolia*). It has a wide distribution in the western states, and the fruits are edible. According to the Wikipedia site, the American Indian food known as pemmican was favored by fruits, including serviceberry, in combination with dried meats. Interestingly, the city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in Canada is named after this plant.

Several horticultural selections are sold as cultivars.

The cedar-broom rust and other rust fungi affect many of the serviceberries grown in western Oregon. In some years, the rust is an aesthetic problem, but does not seem to provide long term harm to the plants.

You can find more information and photographs of the native and other species at the OSU plant ID site at [http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/amal.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/amal.htm).