

Friday, May 27, 2016

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Edible Landscape Plants

For The Southern Blue Ridge by Jeff Zahner Chattooga Gardens

- Blueberries: *Vaccinium* species (25 taxa native to U.S. Southeast)
 - All available cultivars are selections of native species
 - Like our naturally acid soil, sun and good drainage
 - Cross-pollination provides higher yields and better quality; combine different cultivars with same boom time: Early, Mid- or Late-season; some are self-fruitful
 - Some have very good ornamental qualities of fruit, foliage and fall color.
 - Southern Rabbiteye 8-12' tall best for the south, late ripening, need a ladder
 - Northern Highbush 6-8' tall – most common commercial cultivars
 - Half-high are intermediate at 3-6' tall
 - Low bush are 1-2' tall ground cover
 - Cranberry is less than 6" tall, spreading, requires boggy conditions to thrive
- Brambles: Raspberries & blackberries
 - Require full sun, good drainage; blackberries require support trellis
 - Single or twice-bearing cultivars; all are self-fruitful, need no cross pollination
 - Example: 'Heritage' bears in July and September
 - All require annual pruning to remove old primocanes, mulch with leaves
 - Good productive fruit for home gardeners in Cashiers

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- Fruit trees

- Almost all are winter hardy although many years are affected by late spring frosts; apples are late-blooming and the most reliable
 - Apple are best producers; pears, Asian pears, plums also good
 - Cherry, peach, apricot bloom too early most years; microclimate is important
 - Some cultivars are self-fertile while most require cross-pollination (consult tables available on-line)
 - All need sun and good drainage; mulch to reduce grass competition
 - Most are relatively fast growing; structural & corrective pruning required

Paw paw trees *Asimina triloba*

- Native to much of the Eastern U.S. in lower elevations & floodplains
- Large shrub to small tree that spreads prolifically by underground suckers – plant where it can be mowed around; can be pruned into small tree
- Requires two genotypes to cross pollinate for fruit – often two seedlings are grown together in one pot; flies are pollinator – hang meat at bloom time
- Yummy fruit that looks bruised but is not; Cultivars for larger fruit & flavor are expensive due to difficult grafting process

Elderberry *Sambucus canadensis* (Native) & *Sambucus nigra* (European)

- Grows from Canada to Panama to Cashiers usually in moist areas; showy
- Very easy to grow and most fruitful in sun; spreads by underground stems
- Fruit very high in nutrients used medicinally for centuries in Europe (Sambucol)
- Flowers used to flavor refreshing drinks across Europe (and now Cashiers)
- Several cultivars named for golden or purple foliage; some selections named for good fruit production (wild ones are plenty fruitful)