Deciduous Shrubs for Sustainable Built Environments

**Reading Assignments**

In *Landscape Plants For Texas And Environs, Third Ed.*

- Intro materials on shrubs (p. 682, 807)
- Family descriptions for:
  - Acanthaceae (p. 65), Anacardiaceae (p. 67), Berberidaceae (p. 71), Bignoniaceae (p. 71), Caprifoliaceae (p. 74), Fabaceae (p. 82), Lythraceae (p. 87), Malvaceae (p. 88), Oleaceae (p. 92), Rosaceae (p. 99), Saxifragaceae (p. 101), Verbenaceae (p. 106)

- Descriptions for individual species
  See page listings on Plant List 7 Handout (also available under lists on course website)

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**Deciduous Shrubs As Design Elements**

- Seasonal highlights
  - Foliage, form, texture, flowers, fruit
- Massing and edging
- Filler and facer plantings
- Foundation plantings
- Erosion control / bank plantings
- Tall groundcovers
- Traffic direction / barrier plants
Deciduous Shrubs For Ecosystem Services

- Pollinator support / attraction
- Wildlife food / shelter
- Pollution mitigation
- Edible crops

Anisacanthus quadrifidus var. wrightii Flame Acanthus

- Irregular upright twiggy shrub, 3' - 4' tall
  - Shoot hardy z. 8-9(10), roots to z. 7, Texas native
- At best open & airy, ratty when not at its best
  - Prune severely in spring to encourage dense growth; flowers on new wood
- Primary attraction = red-orange to yellow-orange slender trumpet-shaped flowers, spring to frost
  - Attracts hummingbirds & butterflies
- Very site adaptable; heat, drought, salt, and high pH soil tolerance; excellent for naturalizing; needs good drainage

Berberis thunbergii Japanese Barberry

- Small / medium deciduous thorny rounded shrub
- Dwarf selections remain less than 2' to 3' tall
- Tolerates shearing, foundation shrub, barrier
- Cold hardy to USDA z. 5, less vigorous in 8b / 9a
- Soil adaptable; avoid soggy sites; red fall color?
- Invasive tendencies in cooler climates

Restricted in some states because of its invasive tendencies, but very regionally dependent
Caesalpinia pulcherrima
Pride-Of-Barbados
- Exotic semi-evergreen subtropical shrub (USDA z.9b - 13) used as perennial (z.8b / 9a) or summer annual further north
- Feathery green to blue-green foliage, flamboyant red-orange-yellow flowers
- Tolerates coastal sites, wind, reflected heat, & high pH soils, but only limited cold
- Needs well drained soils & warm summers
- Very showy summer accent, shrub border, living fence, spreading shrub / small tree

Caesalpinia gilliesii
Yellow Bird-Of-Paradise
- Irregular shrub / small tree, USDA z.9 (8b) - 13, roots 8a (7b)
- Best in arid regions, tends to acclimate slowly in autumn, naturalized in portions of West Texas

Caesalpinia gilliesii
Yellow Bird-Of-Paradise
- Attractive yellow flowers with red stamens, but not as showy & coarser textured than C. pulcherrima
- Tolerates heat and drought, but not poorly drained soils; not particularly long-lived

Callicarpa americana
American Beautyberry
- Small / medium native deciduous shrub, irregularly rounded form, USDA z. 6 herbaceous perennial / subshrub, woody in z. 8 (7) - 9 (10)
- Grown primarily for the spectacular clusters of purple / occasionally white, pink or maroon fruit, summer / fall; mildly fragrant flowers
**Callicarpa americana**
American Beautyberry
- Probably best pruned heavily in late winter
- Soil and site adaptable, sun for best fruiting
- Excellent drought tolerance
- Good candidate for naturalizing / xeriscaping

**Chaenomeles spp.**
Flowering Quince
- Small / medium deciduous spring flowering shrubs useful in USDA z. 4b-9
- Red, white, salmon, pink, orange, or white blooms in early spring, occasionally in winter in Texas
- Spring accent or thorny barrier shrubs, edible fruit
- May trap debris ala Berberis spp.

**Cuphea spp.**
Cuphea
- Diverse genus of herbaceous annuals, perennials, or small woody shrubs
- Heat, wind, and mildly salt tolerant
- Best in full sun for most, C. hyssopifolia tolerates more shade and still blooms; most are soil pH adaptable
- Limited cold tolerance, require well drained soils; some short-day tendencies
- Cuphea hyssopifolia, Mexican Heather
  - Low spreading woody shrub (USDA zones 9b-13) used as perennial (9a/8b) or annual (8a and colder)
  - Very fine texture, herringbone branching; open center?
  - Tiny lavender, pink to white trumpet-shaped continuous flowers
**Cuphea spp.**

*Cuphea* Ignia, Mexican Cigar Plant; *Cuphea micropetala* Firecracker Plant, & *Cuphea x 'David Verity'* David Verity Cuphea

- Annuals in USDA hardiness zones 7 and colder, dieback perennials in zone 8 (bs), woody shrubs 9-13
- Thin to stout cylindrical cigar or cigarette-shaped yellow, orange, to red flowers; variably summer to frost
- Erect growers, sparse canopy unless pruned

* Cuphea llavea, Bat-Face Cuphea
  - Newest of the group to the trade
  - Sprawling herbaceous perennial (USDA z. 9-13) or annual (zones 8 and colder)
  - Hanging baskets, mixed borders, temporary groundcovers, bedding plants, window boxes, patio pots
  - Small tubular flowers with bat ears, mostly reds and purples, spring to frost, year-round in tropics

**Eysenhardtia texana**

Texas Kidneywood

- A fine textured open canopy deciduous shrub, 6' to 8' (15') tall
- USDA zones 7 - 10; good bee tree
- Scrappy in the wild, denser under cultivation; full sun to part shade
- Small white to creamy white fragrant flowers in 1' - 4' racemes
- Heat, drought, and high pH soil tolerant; can be shaped (shorn)
- Naturalizing, xeriscapes, mixed border, fragrance/sensory gardens

**Fallugia paradoxa**

Apache Plume

- Medium size irregularly rounded shrub with semi-evergreen fine textured dark green foliage
- USDA z. 3-10 with proper provenance selection
- Solitary single 1' rose-like flowers, peak in spring, sporadically to frost
- Achenes with filamentous feathery persistent styles, white-tan flushed pink or purple, showy

**Fallugia paradoxa**

Apache Plume

- Tolerant of reflected heat, drought, high pH soils
- Avoid wet or poorly drained soils, or high relative humidity; cold tolerance varies with provenance; best treated as subshrub
**Forsythia × intermedia**
Border Forsythia

- Medium / large (8’-10’) deciduous irregularly rounded shrub
- Brilliant yellow late winter / early spring bloom; hardy USDA z. 5-7(8)
- Classic two-week wonder, looks great in flower but poor during the rest of the year
- Popular in cold temperate regions

**Forsythia × intermedia**
Border Forsythia

- Very durable and adaptable in USDA hardiness zones 6 - 7, flower buds injured z. 5, reduced vigor / inadequate chilling occurs in z. 8 and warmer
- Timing critical for shearing or flowering is reduced
- Few serious pests, any well drained soil, very rank form

**Hydrangea macrophylla**
Bigleaf Hydrangea

- Irregularly mounded coarse textured deciduous shrub, 3’ to 5’ tall by twice as wide; variegated cultivars are also available
- Valued for pink to blue, some white, flowers; color is often soil pH dependent; large cluster florist cultivars (Hortensia) versus flat-topped cultivars (lace-cap)

**Hydrangea macrophylla**
Bigleaf Hydrangea

- An old-fashioned, USDA z. 7 (6) – 9, shrub or potted plant enjoying a resurgence of popularity
- Best in partial shade; pH adaptable, but needs steady moisture, good quality irrigation water (no excess salts), well drained conditions
- Prune immediately after flowering
**Hydrangea quercifolia**  
*Oakleaf Hydrangea*

- Medium to large tardily deciduous sparsely branched suckering shrub native to the southeastern USA
- Multiple seasons of interest: white late spring / early summer flowers persisting and fading to pink/brown; attractive summer / fall foliage & winter bark

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**Inviting?**

**Justicia brandegeana**  
*Shrimp Plant*

- A woody shrub in USDA z. 9b-13, herbaceous perennial or subshrub in 8b-9a, summer annual in cooler climates for a tropical look
- Irregularly rounded 3’ to 5’ (6’) loose mound
- Regular pruning improves canopy density
- Curved spikes of tubular white flowers with showy pink-red, bronze, or occasionally yellow bracts, inflorescence resembles a shrimp

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**Hydrangea quercifolia**  
*Oakleaf Hydrangea*

- Large coarse dark green oak-shaped spring & summer leaves; wine to maroon red fall color
- Handsome cinnamon-stick peeling winter bark
- Part to moderate shade; moist moderately well drained soils; useful in USDA zones 6(5) to 9
- Difficult to transplant, even from containers
**Justicia brandegeana**  
Shrimp Plant

- Tolerates sun to moderate shade, still blooms in shade, soil pH adaptable, heat tolerant, but requires moderate moisture to grow well
- Probably best used *en masse* in shady spots or as an accent for a hot spot in the landscape

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**Pavonia lasiopetala**  
Rockrose

- Mostly deciduous to semi-evergreen woody shrub USDA z. 9 - 11, subshrub or herbaceous perennial z. 8 (7b); TX native
- Foliage is open at best, ratty if not periodically pruned, 1' to 3' (5') tall
- Pink hibiscus-like flowers are best feature
- Tolerates much heat and drought, some salts; requires well drained soils & sun
- Xeriscapes, naturalizing, southwestern landscapes, informal perennial and mixed borders, perhaps rock gardens

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**Philadelphus cornarius**  
Sweet Mock Orange

- Medium size old-fashioned deciduous shrub, 6' to 8' (12') tall
- Showy highly fragrant white late spring to early summer flowers are primary feature of interest
- Rounded to irregular mounds of suckering stems; z. (4) 5 – 8 (9)
- Cotton root rot resistant, but mostly an asset only in flower
- Durable, adapted to variety of well drained soils, sun to part shade, & survives moderate drought

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**Rhus aromatica**  
Fragrant Sumac

- Small to medium size shrub with trifoliate leaves
- Good yellow, orange, red fall color; drought & heat tolerant; hardy z. 4-8 (9), intolerant of poor drainage
- Multi-purpose shrub for low input arid landscapes
**Spiraea spp.  Spirea**

- Important group of deciduous landscape shrubs
- Growth habit typically suckering rounded mounds to fountain-like; tendency to legginess
  - Variable size, small to medium, 2' to 6'+
  - Mostly one dimensional plants
  - Most species with large displays of white flowers in spring, fruit inconsequential
- Most species with small green to blue-green leaves; fall color is variable
- Generally tough shrubs; variability is present among species in cold (z. 3 - 6), heat (z. 7 - 9a), and drought adaptability

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**Spiraea × vanhouttei  Vanhoutte Spirea**

- Medium (4' - 8') fountain or arching rounded shrub
- Moderately fine textured in leaf, medium in winter
- Green to blue-green foliage, white spring flowers
- Typical of many *Spiraea spp.*, looks great two weeks / year in flower, moderately ratty rest of year

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**Spiraea × bumalda  Bumalda Spirea**

- Smaller (2' - 4') & more refined shrub than many in this genus; broader than tall, cushion-like
- Good growth form, cultivars with red or yellow new growth
- Nearly white to dark pink spring and summer flowers
- Best in north Texas, not south

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**Symphoricarpos orbiculatus  Coralberry**

- A tardily deciduous native Texas rhizomatous suckering shrub, 2' to 4' (rarely 6') tall
- With proper provenance z. 3 - 9
- Small rounded blue-green to green leaves, no fall color
- Tiny pinkish green to pink flowers in early to late summer
- Small coral pink to purple-red berry-like drupes, sometimes showy
- Effective as groundcover or understory shrub, rejuvenation pruning is sometimes required
**Tecoma stans var. stans**
Tree Yellow Bells

- Similar to *T. stans var. angustata*, but more tree form, 15' - 20' tall in tropics, coarser foliage, and sometimes greater flowering & propensity to bloom when young; ‘Gold Star’ is a Texas Superstar®
- Reliably cold hardy as a tree or large shrub only in tropical to subtropical regions, z. 10 (9) – 13, often returns from roots in zones 8 and 9
- Great heat tolerance, good drought & high pH soil tolerance, takes some salt exposure
- Native to Rio Grande Valley of Texas and Mexico

**Tecoma stans var. angustata**
Yellow Bells

- Woody shrub (z.9 - 10) often used as herbaceous perennial (z. 8) or summer annual (z. 7 colder)
- Irregularly rounded suckering shrub, 3' to 6' tall
- Foliage reminiscent of elderberry (*Sambucus spp.*)
  - Overall moderate textured, tendency to an open canopy

**Vaccinium corymbosum**
Highbush Blueberry

- Widely grown deciduous medium to large multistem shrub, 6’ to 8’ (10’)
- Blue-green foliage; use USDA z. 3-8
- Small white urn-shaped flowers on old wood in spring
- Edible commercial blueberries
- Sometimes develops red fall color
- Needs acidic soils, regular moisture, & drainage; alkaline & salt intolerant
- Less heat tolerant than *V. virgatum*, Rabbiteye Blueberry, better in south

**Tecoma stans**

- Showy 1” - 3” yellow trumpet-shaped flowers
  - Peak in early summer, sporadic flushes till frost
  - Cultivars vary in extent of repeat flowering
- Cold hardiness is main limitation, requires excellent drainage, heat & drought tolerant
**Weigela florida**
*Weigela*

- Old-fashion deciduous medium shrub, 4' to 8' (10')
- Funnel-shaped flowers are white, pink, to red-purple, blooms on old wood

**Weigela florida**
*Weigela*

- Lots of upright arching stems from woody base resulting in an irregular rounded mound
- Awfully ragged in winter, handsome only in flower, variegated forms add some color outside of flowering
- Cold hardy to USDA zones 5 (4b), but not vigorous due to inadequate chilling in z. 8-9

**Questions / Comments?**

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