



Halesia diptera Two-Winged Silverbell¹

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INTRODUCTION

Two-Winged Silverbell is a wonderful, small, deciduous native tree, reaching 20 to 30 feet in height, with a fairly dense, rounded silhouette when grown in the full sun (Fig. 1). In its native habitat as an understory tree along stream banks it appears more open. Branches grow from the base of the tree forming a multi-trunked tree suited for specimen or patio planting. Although native to the deep south, it is, unfortunately, known little and not grown by many nurseries. In springtime, the trees produce a multitude of beautiful, showy, bell-shaped white flowers which are followed by two-winged, 1.5 to 2-inch-long drupes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Halesia diptera*

Pronunciation: hal-EE-zhee-uh DIP-ter-uh

Common name(s): Two-Winged Silverbell, Snowdrop Tree

Family: *Styracaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); near a deck or patio; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); no proven urban tolerance

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

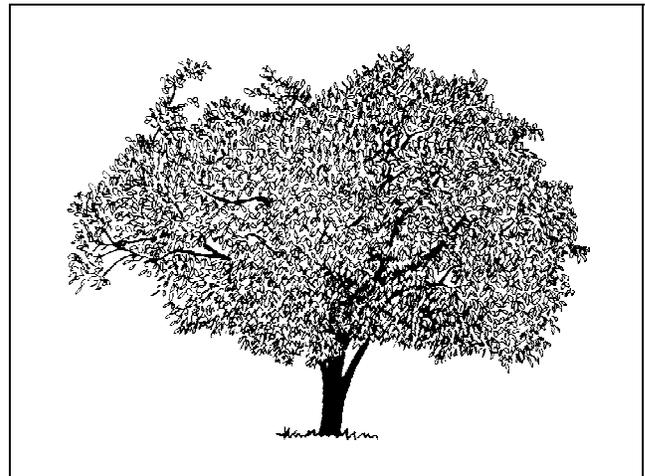


Figure 1. Middle-aged Two-Winged Silverbell.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 20 to 30 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: yellow

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple

trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

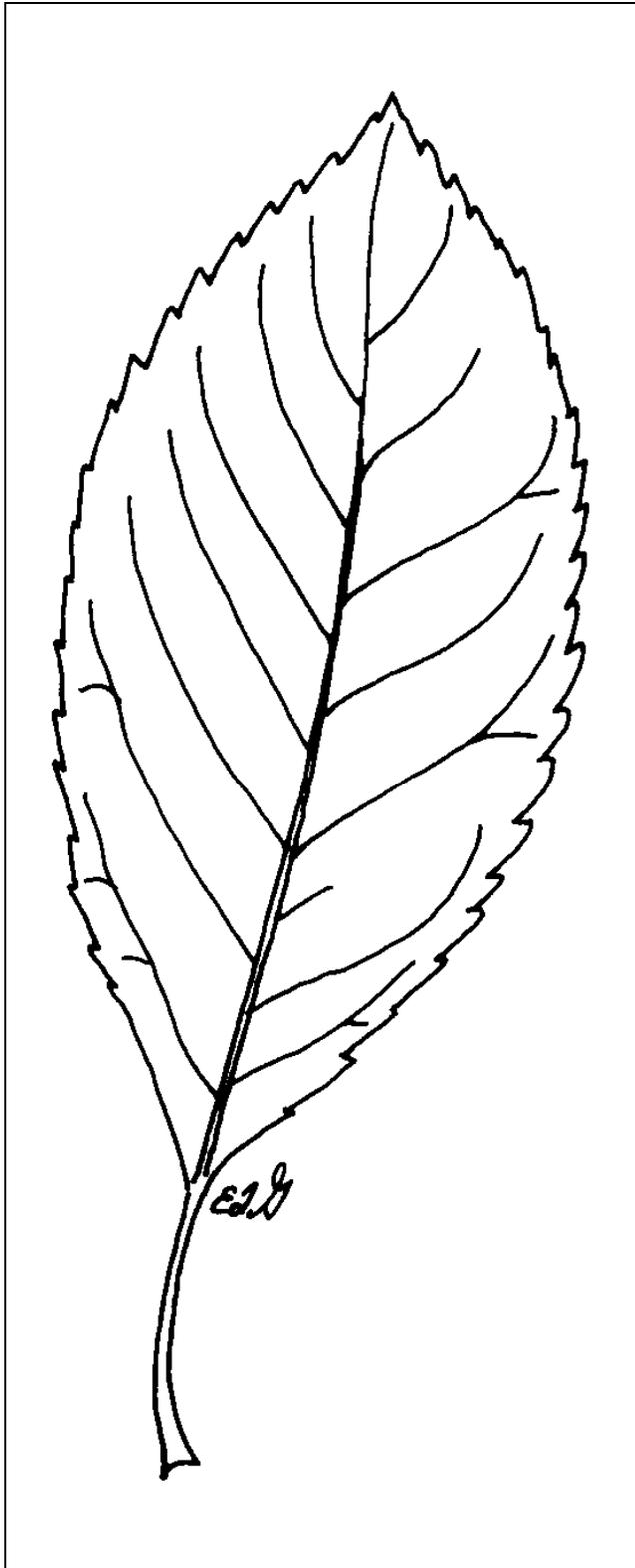


Figure 3. Foliage of Two-Winged Silverbell.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Two-Winged Silverbell is slowly gaining in popularity for landscape use, and is ideal for naturalizing in locations with moist soil. It is not drought-tolerant and should always be located in a protected spot sheltered from full day sun and wind. Grows best with mulch beneath the entire canopy. It makes a nice addition to the shaded shrub border with its spring flower display and creates an excellent understory tree beneath large natives. Use it as you would Flowering Dogwood. Also used as a patio tree for creating shade in a small, residential landscape. Not a tree for planting in the open or along a street.

Two-Winged Silverbell should be located in partial shade on very well-drained acid soil where leaf litter and mulch are allowed to accumulate. It grows in full sun in the north, adapts to almost total shade. It is not adapted to clay.

Variety *magniflora* has larger flowers and is a vigorous grower in the South.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. It is amazingly pest free.