



Halesia diptera Two-Winged Silverbell¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

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

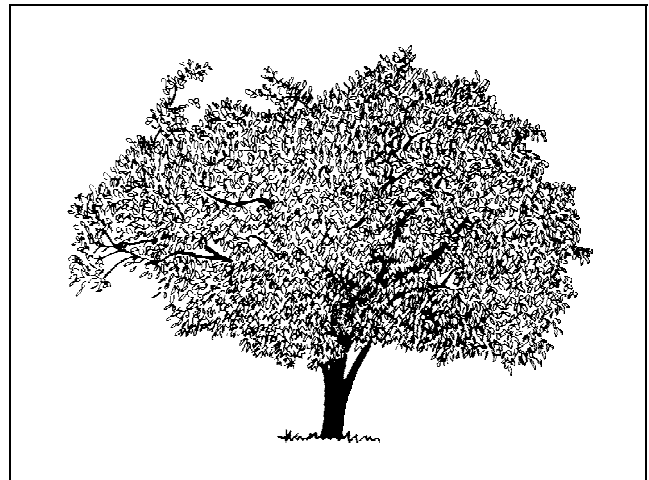


Figure 1. Middle-aged Two-Winged Silverbell.

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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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

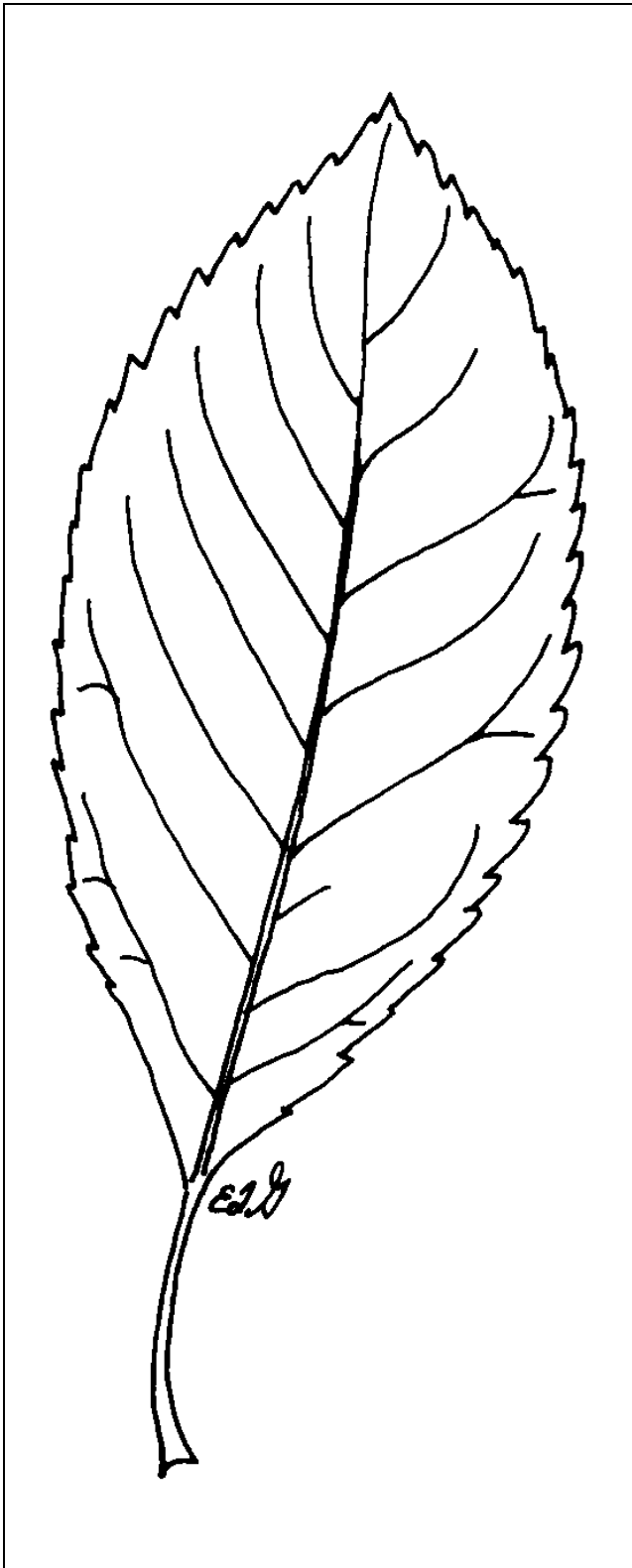


Figure 3. Foliage of Two-Winged Silverbell.

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.