

## Tree Flowers of the Month

Tree of the Month - April 2017

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Right now every plant feels like it is flowering and the trees are at full flower strength too, Spring frolicking isn't just for the birds and the bees. Much of that chartreuse green we see on the trees all over is not the expected new green leaves, so much as the tree flowers. There are, of course, the beautiful showy flowers of the Magnolias, Crabs, Redbuds, and Callery Pears that we love. But the less showy flowers that are bright green and sometimes less vibrant hues of pink or yellow are



The chartreuse flowers of a Maple tree



The delicate catkin flowers of the White Birch

also in abundance this time of year. All deciduous trees have flowers and if you are attentive you can see the delicate catkins of the Birches. The Blue Ash flowers and Beech flowers are another of my favorites. Every variety of Maple is flowering as well, right now, and many of them have pushed out there samaras, which is what most of us refer to as "whirlybirds".

So why right now? Most tree lovers are aware that trees bud out in the spring. The secret that we share, which is not so widely known, even by landscapers, is this: trees and shrubs formed their leaf and flower buds 9 or 10 months ago! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, now you can amaze your friends and family with this important unknown fact. You see trees, shrubs and

indeed every green plant get their food from the sun. The low light levels of the winter and early spring sun do not yield enough "food" to produce those complicated and energy draining flower or leaf buds. In temperate climates, the only time there is enough sun food energy is during the energy yielding heights of the previous summer, July August. That's why we get so cranky about when landscapers or homeowners neaten Lilacs or cut back Crabs during fall cleanup. That's right, when all those shears come out in the late summer and fall they remove most of those hard won flowers. Worse yet, is if they're nipped in the bud during spring cleanup. (See Wisdom article , The Seven Deadly Sins of Spring). To have survived all winter long just to be cut down before all the fun begins is so sad.

Remember that it takes lots of energy for all the sex going on this time of year. Those flowers aren't just for us, or the birds and bees, but for the trees too!



The airy detailed flowers of the Blue Ash

