**GCOLA 2019 Tree Give-Away Day**

**By Sheila Johnston**

The annual GCOLA Tree Give Away Day will take place on Saturday, May 11th, in the Ski Gull parking lot, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. This year we are giving away white pine, red pine, and paper birch seedlings. Additionally, we will be giving away red osier dogwood, American hazelnut, and serviceberry/Juneberry bushes. These bushes will add beauty to your landscape while providing habitat and food for a variety of wildlife. Seedlings will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Recipients must be GCOLA members. Ideally, trees and shrubs will be planted on the lake side of members’ properties.

White pines are medium growth trees that will grow best in sand, loam, and clay soil. White pines grow best in full sunlight. During the trees first 10 years of life growth is slow. Between 10 and 20 years of age the tree’s growth rate speeds up. During these years the white pine usually grows about 16 inches per year. It is a long lived tree and normally attains a life span of 200 years.

Red pines (Norway) are fast growth trees that grow well in sand/well drained soil. It is intolerant of shade but does well in windy sites. It is a long-lived tree, reaching a maximum age of 500 years! The species is self pruning; there tend not to be dead branches on the trees.

Paper birch are fast growth trees. Height may increase anywhere from 13 inches to 24 inches per year. Full sun and partial shade are the best lighting conditions for this tree. It prefers a minimum of four hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day. The paper birch grows well in acidic, loamy, moist, sandy, well-drained, and clay soils. While it prefers moisture, the tree has some drought tolerance.

Red osier dogwood is also known as red-twig dogwood and grows 6 to 12 feet tall. They are a multi-stemmed shrub with conspicuous red twigs which add beauty to the winter landscape. In spring they have creamy white blossoms followed by clusters of white berries. Autumn foliage is colorful. In addition to its beauty, this shrub is beneficial to birds and butterflies.

American hazelnut provides a variety of wildlife with food and shelter. Luna moth caterpillars feed on the leaves, nuts, and stems. Nuts are eaten by a variety of birds including red-bellied woodpecker, quail, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and blue jays. The male flowers and buds provide an important source of food for ruffed grouse and wild turkeys in winter. American hazelnuts provide excellent cover and nesting for many birds. Fall color is an attractive yellow to orange to copper color. They do well in full sun to medium shade, but can be grown successfully in deep shade. They have no serious diseases or pests.

The serviceberry/Juneberry offers year round ornamental appeal and attracts and feeds wildlife. It is one of the earliest bushes to flower and has delicate white petals. It grows best in partial shade. It is a hardy plant that can tolerate a wide range of conditions, but thrives in well-drained, moist, acidic soil. The berries are edible and flavorful and work well in jellies and pies. It is a diverse plant that offers wildlife benefits including fruit, nectar, and edible foliage. Many birds enjoy the fruit, including chickadees, juncos, bluebirds, goldfinches, orioles, tanagers, and more. Butterflies make use of the nectar, and the plant serves as a host to swallowtail larvae. Leaves turn in the fall to a range of red, yellow and orange and beautify the landscape.

Mark your calendars for May 11, and come and get some seedlings! Mother Nature will thank you!