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Dendrology

Backyard Tree Species



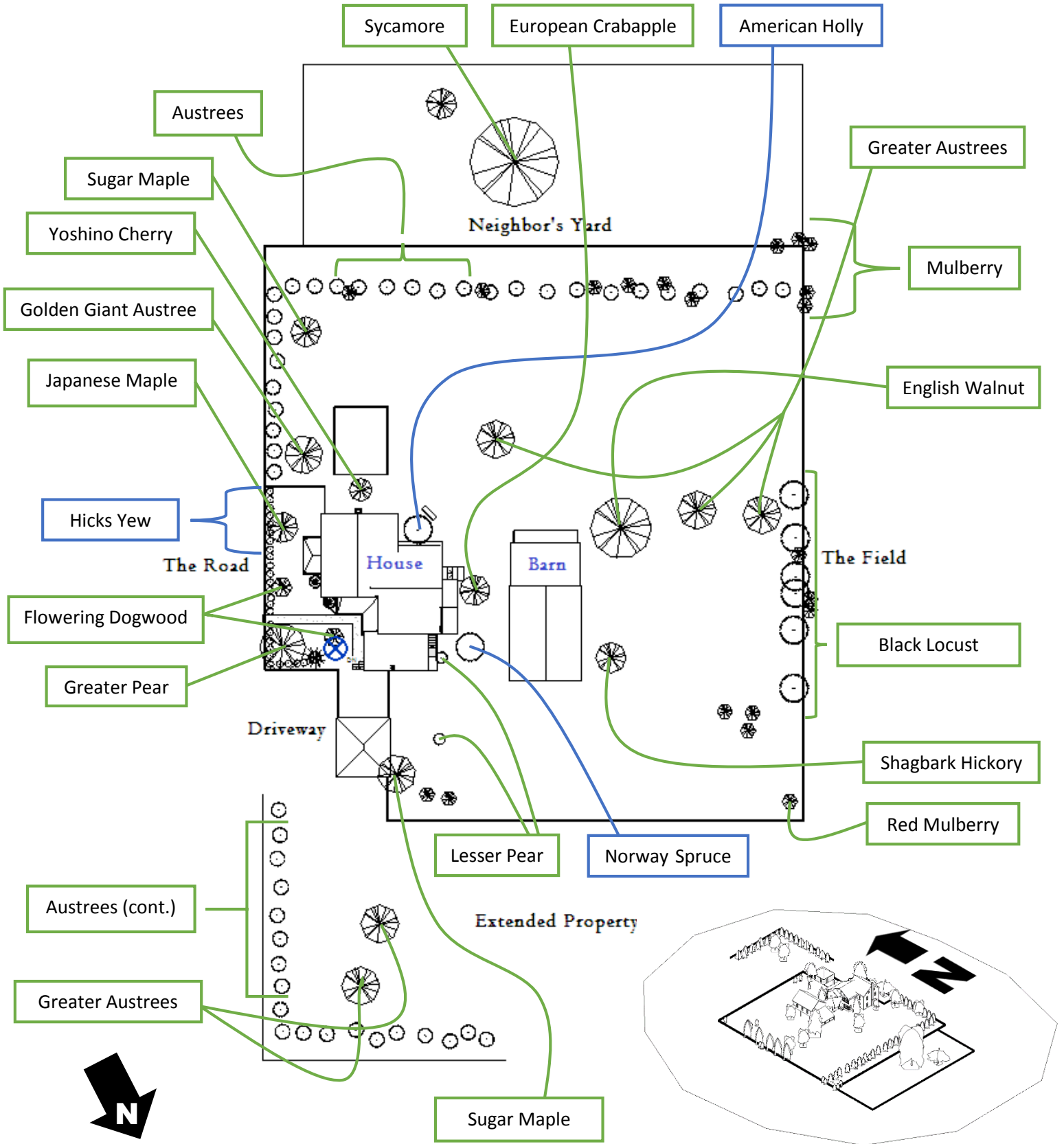
As I mentioned in my first paper on ornithology, I've documented every bird I have been able to spot in our yard. I mentioned how we owe our lush arboretum for attracting so many unique visitors. Here I will be documenting in detail every tree and bush in our yard with the exclusion of weeds. I've debated what trees to leave out, as many trees near our back fence have grown on their own. Most of these unwanted trees are mulberries, which I am currently cutting down.

Our yard has a basic three-acre square layout that is fenced off by a 5ft metal fence on all sides, beginning at the edge of our driveway and looping all the way around to the side of our garage, which itself is a separate building from our house. Right of our driveway is a large sloped area that is still technically part of our property, though we keep it open to the road to allow our farming neighbors to mow it over on their way to harvesting the corn fields directly behind our yard. In this open field we have an L-shaped wall of **hybrid willow austrees** that wall off our neighbors' view from us for privacy. On the other side of our yard we've planted a long row of the same austrees but to block off our closer neighbor, as well as a somewhat distant, towering landfill. In between both rows of austrees on the perimeter of our fence are invasive **white mulberry** trees. These are incredibly difficult to deal with because they grow right up against walls and snuggly against other trees, making them a pain to try and chop down with an axe and dangerous to mow with a chainsaw. It doesn't help that they also grow back even after you have chopped them down, meaning uprooting them is the only viable option. Also, near the very back of our yard are 6 large **black locusts**, in between which are a few **trees of heaven**.

Now that our austrees are out of the way, at the moment at least, I'll move on to the trees in our inner back yard, working my way from the outside in. Near the back of our garage and the steps to our shop-house connection, there are two small **pear trees**. If you read my original bird paper you'll know that the one nearest to the shop has been taken over by a mother mourning dove. In the very far left hand corner of our yard is a medium sized **sugar maple** that is now a Cenotaph (grave where no body is present) for an orange and white cat named meow-meow that passed away recently, he loved to sit under this tree. Right beside our garden is a Korean **Yoshino cherry tree**. In the corner where our house's new addition meets the old house lies an **American holly** that keeps its leaves year-round because it is coniferous. In no specific location in our backyard we planted 3 other austrees that grew bigger than all the bordering ones, likely due to larger space for their roots I'd assume. Close to our barn is a young **shagbark hickory**, a **European crabapple**, and a tall **white spruce**. Finally, in the dead center of our yard is an enormous **English walnut** that offers shade to the whole scene.





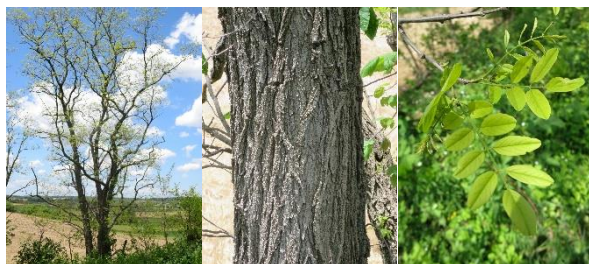
Continuing on now to the trees in our front yard. Immediately visible upon entering our driveway is a large **greater pear**. Under the shade of the pear is a **flowering dogwood** surrounded at its base with several small flowers enclosed by a rock circle. Surrounding the perimeter of the garden to block the view of the road is a row of **hicks yew** bushes. Finally, to bring the whole yard together is a tall **Japanese red maple** that casts shadows into both my room and my sister's every morning.






Below is an architectural site plan done in Revit architecture with labels identifying all trees. Text boxes in green represent deciduous trees, while coniferous trees are shown in blue.







Identified species w/ details.

Here is an up-to-date list of all live trees on or near our property including full view, bark, and leaves.

<p style="text-align: center;">American Holly <i>Ilex opaca</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Aquifoliaceae</i> Type: <i>Coniferous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">American Sycamore <i>Platanus occidentalis</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Plantanaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">(This tree is on our neighbor's property)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Austree (Hybrid Willow) <i>Salix matsudana</i> × <i>Salix alba</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Salicaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 5 Greater, 36 Lesser</p> <p>This combination of willow genetics has created a species that grows extremely quickly, usually reaching 20' within two years of planting. Can also reach 50 – 70' if given enough space and fertile soil.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Greater Variation</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Lesser Variation</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Black Locust <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Fabaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 6</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">English Walnut <i>Juglans regia</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Juglandaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">European Crabapple <i>Malus sylvestris</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Rosaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">European Pear <i>Pyrus communis</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Rosaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 1 Greater, 2 Lesser</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Greater Variation</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Lesser Variation</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Cornaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Opposite</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 2</p>	

<p>Hicks Yew (Hybrid Yew) <i>Taxus × media 'Hicksii'</i> Family: <i>Taxaceae</i> Type: <i>Coniferous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p>On property: 24</p>	
<p>Japanese Maple <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i> Family: <i>Ericaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p>On property: 2 One full tree in front. A new sapling out back.</p>	
<p>Norway Spruce <i>Picea abies</i> Family: <i>Pinaceae</i> Type: <i>Coniferous</i> Branching: <i>Universal on trunk, Opposite on branch</i></p> <hr/> <p>On property: 1</p>	
<p>Red Mulberry <i>Morus rubra</i> Family: <i>Moraceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p>On property: 1</p>	
<p>Shagbark Hickory <i>Carya ovata</i> Family: <i>Juglandaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p>On property: 1</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Sugar Maple <i>Acer saccharum</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Sapindaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Opposite</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 2</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Tree of Heaven <i>Ailanthus altissima</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Simaroubaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 4+ This is an invasive species.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Yoshino Cherry (Hybrid Cherry) <i>Prunus × yedoensis</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Rosaceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Opposite</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 1 A hybrid between Oshima cherry & Higan cherry.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">White Mulberry <i>Morus alba</i></p> <p>Family: <i>Moraceae</i> Type: <i>Deciduous</i> Branching: <i>Alternate</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">On property: 30+ This is another highly invasive species.</p>	

Practical Uses for Trees

The trees we've planted have had several beneficial purposes besides simply looking nice and attracting birds. Below I will go over a few of the leading factors.

Our house is situated on top of a hill in front of the beginning of Little Chiques Creek and Brubaker Run, meaning that most rainwater we receive either drains out to the catch basins at the base of our hill, or extends to the creeks further below. Because of this, it made sense to plant our large array of austrees to suck up some of the water to keep the lower part of our back yard from becoming swampy during the rainy season. While on the topic of austrees, some of their other functions include blocking the view and sound of the nearby landfill that sits past Quarry Road. This might not seem like much, but the landfill has increased in size over the years and would become the first thing visitors see when looking out the window to our backyard. Sadly, these trees are nearing the end of their 15-year life cycle and have begun snapping at the base one by one during large storms. Some can even be pushed over by hand at this point.

In our front yard, a row of hybrid yew hedges offers year-round protection from the wind that hits our house directly from the east, and more importantly, blocks the view of the road. These trees are about 10 feet tall and offer just enough coverage to let the sunlight into our yard for the flowers but also keeps traffic out of view. The Yews offer more sound attenuation than that of the open deciduous types, but idiots blaring the stereo in their car at night still passes through, unfortunately.

The American holly and Norway spruce obstruct radiation from the sun and filter air coming from west of the fields behind us. The placement of these two coniferous trees was key because they would be blocking sun and wind year-round. The holly sits in the corner where our old house and the new addition meet so no views are changed. The Norway spruce is in the intersection where the entrance to our barn, the road, and the greater backyard all meet. This location would be empty without something in the center. It is a common traffic spot that I walk through so having shade here feels right. The long and level branches are great for gymnastics practice, pull-ups, and hanging sit-ups.

From a google maps bird's eye view of our yard, it is pretty clear that we prefer privacy more than our neighbors. Nearly every square foot of fence has a tree at least 10 feet near it. Overhead it looks like someone lived here and never decided to mow their lawn. In the summer you can hardly see the roof of our house from the road under all the tree cover. Compared to even our farm neighbors we take the gardening game to an extreme. There have been times where our trees have had negative effects as well. One of our many greater austrees happened to be planted right ovetop of our septic tank, despite the original drawings of our house saying it was somewhere completely different. This required us to completely remove the tree and its roots entirely. Back when our austrees were in their prime, they grew so fast that the workers who trim trees around the power lines had to constantly cut them short. This happens with our pear tree as well, which is right below a transformer on our line.

Work Cited

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- On “Austrees”
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