



Plants that Tolerate Heavy Clay Soils

Where quality is always growing

Clay soils are very common in Central New York. These types of soils are high in nutrients, but it can be difficult for some plants to establish a root system if the clay is especially dense and hard. It can also be poorly drained. Some plants are better adapted to survive in this type of soil than others. If planting a smaller shrub, you can amend the clay soil with compost to increase the drainage and soften the soil for better root penetration. Digging a hole 2 to 3 times wider than the root ball when planting will help to break up the clay so that young roots can penetrate into the surrounding soil better. We have developed a list of trees and shrubs that do well in heavy clay soils.

Tree	Botanical Name	Varieties Likely Available
Bald Cypress	Taxodium distichum	Green Whisper
Concolor Fir	Abies concolor	
Crabapple	Malus	Many Varieties Available
Dawn Redwood	Metasequoia gliptostromboides	
Ginkgo	Ginkgo biloba	Saratoga or Autumn Gold
Honey Locust	Gleditsia triacanthos	Skyline, Shademaster, Sunburst
Katsura	Cercidiphyllum	Red Fox and Weeping
Norway Spruce	Picea abies	Weeping and Dwarf
Ornamental Pear	Pyrus calleryana	Cleveland Select
Paperbark Maple	Acer griseum	
Red Maple	Acer rubrum	Many Varieties Available
Redbud	Cercis canadensis	Many Varieties Available
River Birch	Betula nigra	Duraheat and Heritage
Serviceberry Tree Form	Amelanchier spp.	Many Varieties Available
Tulip Tree	Liriodendron tulipifera	
Willow	Salix spp.	Niobe and Prairie Cascade
Shrubs		
Bush Honeysuckle	Diervilla lonicera	Cool Splash
Burning Bush	Euonymus alatus	Dwarf and Little Moses
Eastern White Cedar	Thuja occidentalis	Emerald Green and many more
Ninebark	Physocarpus opulifolius	Many Varieties Available
Potentilla	Potentilla fruticosa	Many Varieties Available
Redosier Dogwood	Cornus sericea	Cardinal, Bailey's, and Yellow Twig
Rugosa Rose	Rosa rugosa	Many Varieties Available
Serviceberry	Amelanchier spp.	Many Varieties Available
Spirea	Spiraea spp.	Many Varieties Available
Tatarian Dogwood	Cornus alba	Ivory Halo
Winterberry	Ilex verticillata	Many Varieties Available