**Halesia monticola: Mountain Silverbell**

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**Introduction**

Mountain Silverbell grows into a 40-foot tree in its natural habitat but is about 20 to 30 feet tall in gardens and landscapes, with an upright-spreading crown. The tree prefers sandy loam and begins blooming when only 10 to 12 feet tall. The flowers are larger than those of *Halesia carolina*. The white, bell-shaped blossoms are borne in clusters of up to five. Flowering occurs along last years branches in mid-spring on the previous season's wood. Because the flowers point downward, they are partially hidden by the foliage and best viewed from below. Other ornamental features are the yellow fall color and the bark, which peels off in large, flat scales. The pale yellow fruits are quite attractive as they hang down from last years branches. Mountain Silverbell may transplant poorly in the fall.

**General Information**

Scientific name: *Halesia monticola*

Pronunciation: hal-EH-zhee-uh mawn-tih-KOLE-uh

Common name(s): Mountain Silverbell

Family: Styracaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 5A through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: specimen; street without sidewalk; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median; container or planter

Availability: not native to North America
**Description**

Height: 40 to 60 feet  
Spread: 20 to 30 feet  
Crown uniformity: irregular  
Crown shape: vase, oval, pyramidal  
Crown density: moderate  
Growth rate: fast  
Texture: medium

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: serrate  
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval), ovate  
Leaf venation: pinnate  
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: yellow  
Fall characteristic: showy

**Flower**

Flower color: white/cream/gray  
Flower characteristics: very showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: oval  
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches  
Fruit covering: dry or hard  
Fruit color: yellow  
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns  
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure  
Breakage: resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown  
**Current year twig thickness:** thin  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade  
Soil tolerances: sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained; occasionally wet  
Drought tolerance: moderate  
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

**Other**

Roots: not a problem  
Winter interest: yes  
Outstanding tree: yes  
Ozone sensitivity: unknown  
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown  
Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

This tree is interesting all year long, with attractive medium green foliage, pretty flowers, showy fruits, and exfoliating bark. It branches low to the ground, making a nice lawn or specimen tree and when pruned to one central leader can be used as a street tree in residential areas in less than full-day sun. The bark shows off nicely with foliage removed from the lower branches, and multistemmed specimens come-to-life when lit from below at nighttime.

An understory tree best suited for a partially shaded or shaded location, silverbell prefers moist, fertile soil with an accumulation of leaf litter and/or mulch. Water during a drought and avoid compacted soil.

One cultivar is listed: `Rosea'--pale pink flowers.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of serious concern, occasionally leaf spot.