White Fringetree, Old-man’s-beard
*Chionanthus virginicus*

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**Summary:**
Foliage: About 5 inch long elliptic leaves; deciduous  
Height: About 12 feet tall  
Spread: About 12 feet wide  
Shape: Large shrub/small tree form that varies with individual; form ranges from bushy to more open to more tree-like  
Main features: White fringetree is a slow-growing large shrub or small tree (depending on how and if one prunes it) with a very showy display of fleecy white flowers in late April/early May. Female plants bear pendulous clusters of dark blue fruit that are nice upon close inspection. This species is quite tough and tolerates drought as well as wet soils; will grow in full sun or part shade.

**Plant Needs:**
Zone: 4 to 9  
Light: Full sun to part shade  
Moisture: Wet to dry  
Soil type: Most soils  
PpH range: Acid

**Functions:**
Fringetree is suitable as a specimen plant (due to its spectacular flower show), in borders, in mass, and any where a small deciduous tree is appropriate. Most un-pruned plants will be large shrubs; one can remove lower limbs to develop a tree form. The flower show is especially noticeable and showy when planted in front of a dark background such as dark-leaved conifers or evergreen hollies.

**Care:**
No special care is needed. Fringetree can be developed into a small tree form by removing lower limbs/foliage; this species will be shrub-like (multi-stem, foliage and branches to near ground level) without pruning.

**Additional Information:**
A few cultivars are available in the trade. These are:
‘Emerald Knight’ upright form with long dark green and glossy leaves Prodigy® rounded habit; very floriferous  
‘Spring Fleecing’ a glossy narrow leaf form; very floriferous

**Chinese fringetree, Chionanthus retusus**, is an attractive small tree that produces very showy fleecy flowers in late April/May. Leaves are glossy and leathery; they may be roundish or elliptic depending on origin (foliage of Northern Type is elliptic and Southern Type is roundish). This species is adaptable in zones 6 to 8.