

# Nanking Cherry



# Nanking Cherry (*Prunus tomentosa*)

## General Description

A winter hardy, moderately fast-growing, short-lived shrub native to China, Japan, and the Himalayas. A broad spreading, densely twiggy shrub, becoming more open and picturesque with age. Also called Manchu cherry. Edible fruits are dark red and excellent for pies and jellies.

### Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Brown.

Bud Size - 1/8 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, elliptical.

Leaf Margins - Unequally serrate.

Leaf Surface - Rough-veined, pubescent.

Leaf Length - 2 to 3 inches.

Leaf Width - 1 to 1½ inches.

Leaf Color - Medium to dark green above; white hairs below; yellow fall color.

### Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Small but numerous.

Flower Color - Pink in bud, becoming near white.

Fruit Type - Cherry-shaped drupe.

Fruit Color - Dark red.

### Form

Growth Habit - Upright, semi-spreading, and densely twiggy.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; fine, winter.

Crown Height - 6 to 10 feet.

Crown Width - 6 to 10 feet.

Bark Color - Shiny brown and exfoliating when mature.

Root System - Medium in depth and spread.

## Environmental Requirements

### Soils

Soil Texture - Prefers loamy soils.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 7.5.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 3, 4, 4C, 5.

### Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 2.

### Water

Tolerates considerable wind and dryness.

### Light

Full sun only.

## Uses

### Conservation/Windbreaks

Medium shrub for farmstead windbreaks.

### Wildlife

Fruit is relished by many songbirds. Nesting cover for a few species of songbirds. Browsed by rabbits, mice, and deer, which could cause serious injury if control measures are not taken.

### Agroforestry Products

Food - Fruits processed into wine, syrup, jellies and pies.

Medicinal - Some *Prunus* species have been used as an astringent, for coughs, bronchial problems; an antibiotic, in cancer research, and for gout.

### Urban/Recreational

Used for screen, hedge, border and specimen plantings. It is often a rather short-lived plant.

## Cultivated Varieties

White Nanking Cherry (*Prunus tomentosa* 'Leucocarpa') - White fruits.

## Related Species

American Plum (*Prunus americana*)

Chokecherry (*P. virginiana*)

Mongolian Cherry (*P. fruticosa*)

Western Sandcherry (*P. besseyi*)

## Pests

Common diseases include branch cankers. Extracts of various *Prunus* species are toxic to insect pests.