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.