

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.