

Russian Almond



Russian Almond (*Prunus tenella*)

General Description

A low, suckering shrub native to western Asia and eastern Siberia. Hardy, but not highly desirable for landscape purposes because its suckering habit makes it difficult to control. However, the dense thickets formed are excellent for wildlife food and cover. Abundant pink to rosy flowers in early spring.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Brown.

Bud Size - 1/8 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, obovate-oblong.

Leaf Margins - Sharply serrate.

Leaf Surface - Leathery, glabrous, prominently veined beneath.

Leaf Length - 1 to 3 inches.

Leaf Width - 1/2 to 1 inch.

Leaf Color - Green above, pale beneath; orange fall color.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Small, 1 to 3 per cluster.

Flower Color - Pink to rose.

Fruit Type - An ovoid nut with a very hard hairy shell, 3/4 inch across.

Fruit Color - Tan.

Form

Growth Habit - Upright, suckering.

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

Crown Height - 3 to 5 feet.

Crown Width - 3 to 5 feet.

Bark Color - Brown.

Root System - Medium in depth and spread.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Prefers loamy soils. Performs satisfactorily in heavy clay.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 8.0.

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

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 2.

Water

Fair drought resistance.

Light

Full sun only.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Small shrub for farmstead windbreak, riparian plantings, and highway beautification.

Wildlife

Very good browse. Provides good escape and loafing cover for game birds and rabbits.

Agroforestry Products

Medicinal - Some *Prunus* species have been used for cancer research and as an astringent for coughs, colds, and gout.

Urban/Recreational

Spreading ground cover, best if planted in masses.

Cultivated Varieties

Firehill Russian Almond (*Prunus tenella* 'Fire Hill') - Red flowers.

Regal Russian Almond (*P. tenella* 'Regal'). Released by USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota.

White Russian Almond (*P. tenella* 'Alba') - White flowers.

Related Species

Several native and adapted plums, cherries, almonds (*Prunus* species)

Pests

No major pest problems. Extracts of various *Prunus* species are toxic to insect pests.