American Plum
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(*Prunus americana*)

**General Description**
The wild plum is a native tall shrub to small tree which is thorny, winter-hardy, and thicket-forming. Edible fruit used to make preserves and jellies.

**Leaves and Buds**
- **Bud Arrangement**: Alternate.
- **Bud Color**: Brown to dark brown.
- **Bud Size**: 1/8 to 1/4 inch.
- **Leaf Type and Shape**: Simple leaves, elliptical to oblong-ovate.
- **Leaf Margins**: Margins are sharply and often doubly-serrate.
- **Leaf Surface**: Smooth to slightly hairy along the midrib beneath.
- **Leaf Length**: 2 to 4 inches.
- **Leaf Width**: 1 to 2 inches.
- **Leaf Color**: Medium green, changing to yellow or reddish in autumn.

**Flowers and Fruits**
- **Flower Type**: Cross-pollinating, fascicles.
- **Flower Color**: White.
- **Fruit Type**: Drupe, seed is a compressed stone.
- **Fruit Color**: Fruits are subglobose, red to yellow when mature.

**Form**
- **Growth Habit**: Round-headed crown, suckers freely.
- **Texture**: Medium, summer; medium, winter.
- **Crown Height**: 8 to 10 feet.
- **Crown Width**: 8 to 10 feet.
- **Bark Color**: Grayish-black and becomes quite scaly on older plants.
- **Root System**: Somewhat shallow, wider than crown spread.

**Environmental Requirements**

**Soils**
- Soil Texture: Adapted to a wide variety of soil types.
- Soil pH: 5.5 to 7.5.
- Windbreak Suitability Group: 1, 3, 4, 4C, 5.

**Cold Hardiness**
- USDA Zone 3.

**Water**
- Fair to good drought tolerance.

**Light**
- Full sun to partial shade.

**Uses**

**Conservation/Windbreaks**
- Medium to tall shrub for farmstead windbreaks, highway and riparian plantings.

**Wildlife**
- Important to songbirds and animals for nesting, loafing, and bedding area. Fruit is not a preferred food for songbirds and game birds. Twigs and foliage browsed by deer.

**Agroforestry Products**
- **Food**: Fruit eaten fresh and processed as preserves and jellies.
- **Medicinal**: Used by Native Americans to treat skin abrasions.

**Urban/Recreational**
- Used for naturalizing and border plantings. Suckers profusely which is objectionable in home landscapes.

**Cultivated Varieties**

**Related Species**
- Beach Plum (*P. maritima*)
- Princess Kay Plum (*P. nigra ‘Princess Kay’*) - Double white flowers, not very drought tolerant.

**Pests**
- Common diseases include stem decay, branch cankers, black knot, and plum pockets. Extracts of leaves and flowers are toxic to various insects.