European Mountain-ash
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*(Sorbus aucuparia)*

**General Description**
A small to medium-sized tree native to northern Europe and Asia. The most widely planted of all the mountain-ash species. This genus is in the Rose family and susceptible to fireblight. Sunscald may also be a problem on young trees. The largest tree in North Dakota is 36 feet tall with a canopy spread of 39 feet.

**Leaves and Buds**
Bud Arrangement - Alternate.
Bud Color - Terminal bud is woolly, purplish-brown.
Bud Size - 1/4 to 1/2 inch.
Leaf Type and Shape - Pinnate compound, 9 to 15 leaflets per leaf.
Leaf Margins - Serrate, usually entire on lower third.
Leaf Surface - Glabrescent above, glaucous and pubescent beneath.
Leaf Length - 4 to 8 inches; leaflets 3/4 to 1¾ inches.
Leaf Width - 1 to 3 inches; leaflets 1/3 to 1/2 inch.
Leaf Color - Dull dark green; red fall color.

**Flowers and Fruits**
Flower Type - Borne in 3 to 5 inch diameter flat-topped corymbs.
Flower Color - Creamy-white.
Fruit Type - Small, berry-like pome, clustered.
Fruit Color - Bright orange-red.

**Form**
Growth Habit - Erect, forming an ovate or spherical canopy at maturity.
Texture - Fine, summer; medium, winter.
Crown Height - 20 to 30 feet.
Crown Width - 15 to 25 feet.
Bark Color - Young stems are pubescent, becoming glabrous with gray-brown to coppery-brown sheen when older.
Root System - Medium in depth and spread.

**Environmental Requirements**

**Soils**
Soil Texture - Prefers well-drained loams
Soil pH - 4.5 to 7.5. Does not tolerate salinity.
Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 3.

**Cold Hardiness**
USDA Zone 3.

**Water**
Requires additional water during droughts. Does not withstand ponding or water-logged soils.

**Light**
Full sun.

**Uses**

**Conservation/Windbreaks**
Small tree for farmstead windbreaks in eastern half of state in protected areas.

**Wildlife**
Fruits may hang on well into the winter and on some plants appear to be more palatable to birds after they have been subjected to freezing and thawing.

**Agroforestry Products**
Wood - Furniture and tools.
Food - Fruit processed in jams or jellies, particularly in Europe.
Medicinal - Used for sore throats, coughs and diarrhea. Source of parasorbic acid, an antibiotic.

**Urban/Recreational**
Used as a boulevard, specimen, and shade tree in residential landscapes.

**Cultivated Varieties**
Black Hawk Mountain-ash *(Sorbus aucuparia ‘Black Hawk’)*
Cardinal Royal Mountain-ash *(S. aucuparia ‘Cardinal Royal’)*
Coles Columnar Mountain-ash *(S. aucuparia ‘Coles Columnar’)*
Cutleaf European Mountain-ash *(S. aucuparia ‘Asplenifolia’)*
Upright European Mountain-ash *(S. aucuparia ‘Fastigiata’)*
Yellowfruit Mountain-ash *(S. aucuparia ‘Xanthocarpa’)*

**Related Species**
American Mountain-ash *(Sorbus americana)* - Alkaline pH sensitive.
Showy Mountain-ash *(S. decora)* - Alkaline pH sensitive.

**Pests**
Disease pests include fireblight and canker. Insect pests include aphids and scales. Sunscald may occur on young, thin-barked trees.