

Mongolian Cherry



Mongolian Cherry (*Prunus fruticosa*)

General Description

A medium-sized suckering shrub with attractive glossy foliage and cherry-like fruit. Edible fruits which are tart and dark red. Excellent for pie and jelly.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Brown.

Bud Size - 1/8 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, ovate-elliptical.

Leaf Margins - Crenate-serrulate.

Leaf Surface - Glossy, smooth.

Leaf Length - 3/4 to 2 inches.

Leaf Width - 3/8 to 1 inch.

Leaf Color - Dark glossy-green; yellow fall color.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - 2 or 4 flowers in sessile umbels, with leafy bracts.

Flower Color - White.

Fruit Type - Cherry-shaped fruit, globose.

Fruit Color - Dark red.

Form

Growth Habit - Upright to rounded, dense.

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

Crown Height - 3 to 6 feet.

Crown Width - 3 to 6 feet.

Bark Color - Brown.

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

Medium, not drought tolerant.

Light

Full sun only.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Small to medium shrub for farmstead windbreaks, riparian plantings and highway beautification.

Wildlife

Fruits are 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 - Processed as jellies, jams and pies.

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

Urban/Recreational

Used for screen, hedge, border and group plantings.

Cultivated Varieties

Scarlet Mongolian Cherry (*Prunus fruticosa* 'Scarlet') – released by USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota, as a cultivar seed strain.

Related Species

American Plum (*Prunus americana*)

Chokecherry (*P. virginiana*)

Nanking Cherry (*P. tomentosa*)

Western Sandcherry (*P. besseyi*)

Pests

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