


Prunus serotina
(Wild) Black Cherry

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Black Cherry, the largest of our native cherry trees, grows in a variety of habitats through much of the Mid-Atlantic Region* and is noted for the beauty and profusion of its spring blooms. It is entomologist Doug Tallamy’s #2 choice among woody plants for its exceptional support of wildlife.



Tree	Tree, Leaves, Flowers, and Fruit	
Height: 50–80 feet		
Spread: 30–60 feet		
Bloom Color: White		
Characteristics		
Medium to large deciduous tree with dense oval crown, pendulous branches, and deep taproot		
Alternate , glossy, elliptic , lanceolate , or obovate , lightly serrated leaves turn yellow to orange in fall		
Drooping racemes of showy, fragrant, white flowers from April to May		
Drooping clusters of small red drupes ripen to dark purplish-black in late summer		
Smooth bark w/ lenticels matures to rough texture	 	
Spreads via seed dispersal by birds & mammals		
Attributes		
Tolerates drought, salt spray, and black walnut		
Susceptible to many diseases and pests (heavy Eastern Tent Caterpillar infestations can be serious)		
Deer frequently severely damage twigs & leaves		
Used** for jams, flavoring, wood products		
Nectar, pollen, and fruit for insects, birds, and mammals; larval host to ~390 lepidopterans		
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for	
Soil Requirements : Average, well-drained	Morus alba - White Mulberry	
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	Prunus avium & P. subhirtella - Sweet & Higan Cherry	
Water Requirements : Dry, Moist	Pyrus calleryana - Callery (‘Bradford’) Pear	
Can be allelopathic to garden plants	*In the Mid-Atlantic Region, it is native to and common in DC, DE, MD, PA, and VA. **Except for the fruit (pulp and peel), all parts are highly toxic to humans and mammals when eaten. On properties with domesticated herbivores, pick up leaf litter and fallen fruit/pits and branches. Wilted leaves contain greater concentrations of toxins.	
Use as a flowering or shade tree		
Hardiness : USDA Zones 2a–8b		
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria		

Images by Elaine Mills, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Arlington, VA and Rockville, MD