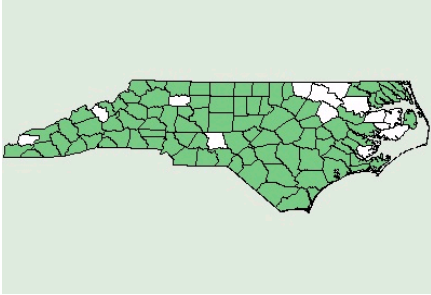


BLACK CHERRY

Prunus Serotina

Perhaps most noted for its profuse spring bloom, attractive summer foliage and fall color. Also called wild or wild rum cherry.



Description: Medium to large deciduous tree. Fragrant white flowers in slender pendulous clusters appear with the foliage in spring, followed by drooping clusters of small red cherries that ripen in late summer to dark purple-black. Foliage turns attractive shades of yellow and rose in fall.

Natural Habitat: Found in the eastern two-thirds of the U.S and throughout most of N.C. Scattered in most types of forests.

Size: 50-80' high, 30-60' spread.

Growth Rate: Fast.

Light: Full sun to part shade.

Planting and Care: Easily grown in average, medium wet, well-drained soils. Best in moist, fertile loams in full sun. Young trees develop a long taproot, which makes transplanting difficult.

Ornamental Value: Showy, fragrant flowers and brilliant fall colors make this a worthy flowering shade tree.

Landscape Use: Tends to be a messy tree - use along the edges of woods.

Commercial/Traditional Uses: Hard, reddish-brown wood takes a fine polish and is used in a large number of products such as furniture, cabinets, gunstocks, and musical instruments. Ripe fruits are marginally edible raw. More commonly, they are cooked with sweeteners to make jams, pies and syrup. Native Americans used cherries fresh, but more commonly dried them, pulverized the entire fruit, pressed them into cakes and cooked them in a fire. The bark is known for its medicinal properties as well - it is used often in cough medicines, tonics and sedatives.

Wildlife Benefits: Numerous songbirds feed on black cherries as they migrate south in the fall. The cherries are also important in the summer and fall diets of the ruffed grouse, wild turkey, and northern bobwhite. Red fox, raccoon, opossum, squirrels and rabbits also eat the fruit, which may also be a favorite of black bears.