Sweet Cherry

Prunus avium

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Mazzard Cherry

Description:

A large upright tree absolutely smothered in very showy white flowers in spring followed by tart red cherries; best for larger landscapes; needs full sun, well drained soil and a second tree for pollination; highly attractive to birds

Edible Qualities

Sweet Cherry is a large tree that is typically grown for its edible qualities. It produces red round fruit (technically 'drupes') which are usually ready for picking in mid summer. Note that the fruits have hard inedible pits inside which must be removed before eating or processing. The fruits have a tart taste and a juicy texture.

The fruit are most often used in the following ways:

- Preserves

Features & Attributes

Sweet Cherry is covered in stunning clusters of fragrant white flowers hanging below the branches in early spring before the leaves. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The pointy leaves turn yellow in fall. The fruits are showy red drupes carried in abundance in mid summer. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The smooth dark red bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.



Sweet Cherry flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Sweet Cherry in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is a deciduous tree with a shapely oval form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Disease

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Sweet Cherry is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Shade
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping



Sweet Cherry bark
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Sweet Cherry will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more. While it is considered to be somewhat self-pollinating, it tends to set heavier quantities of fruit with a different variety of the same species growing nearby.

This tree is typically grown in a designated area of the yard because of its mature size and spread. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.