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Black Cherry *(Prunus serotina)*



A Pictorial Portrait

Illustrations and photos by "Wildman," clipart from Clipart.com

Growing throughout eastern North America, this common native fruit is great raw, or cooked with herbs or spices, thickener and sweetener, to use in sauces, pies, cakes, puddings, and ice cream.



Black Cherry in Flower

Note the alternate (unpaired), long-oval, shiny, finely toothed (serrated), pointed leaves. Small, white, 5-petaled flowers cluster along long stalks.



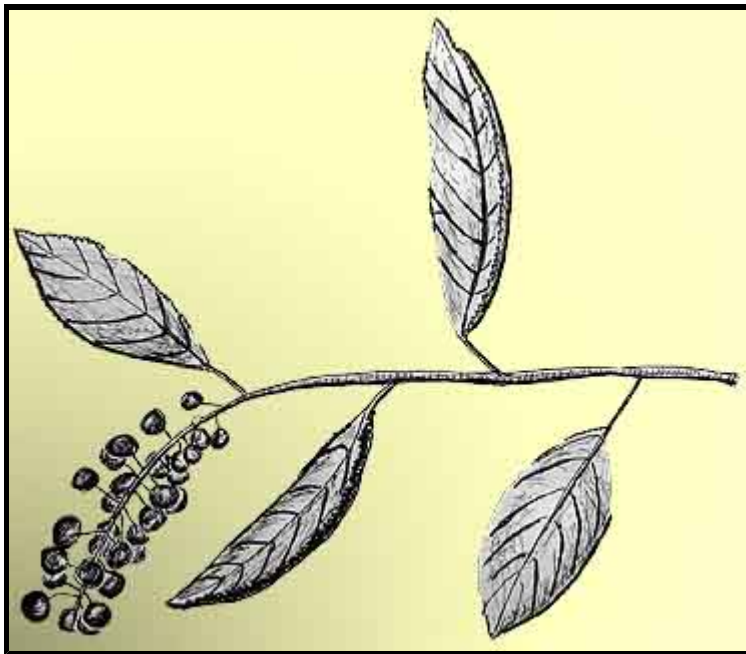
Black Cherry Flowers

Attractive to flies, rank-smelling white flowers, with their protruding stamens, bloom, clustered on long stalks, in early spring.



Black Cherry Leaf Underside

The similar choke cherry lacks the rusty gold fuzz on the midrib of the black cherry leaf's underside.



Black Cherry Branch with Fruit

Globular, black, stalked fruit, each with 1 seed, alternate along a long fruit stalk, from mid- to late summer.



Slim Pickings

Trees with small, hard, sparse fruit, such as this one, are very common. The fruit isn't tasty, and this accounts for the tree's undeserved bad reputation.



Look at the Difference!

Only about 1 out of 15 trees, like this one, have relatively large, juicy, delicious fruit. You're most likely to find them in full sunlight, and in old fields, thickets, and parks that support many of these trees.



Black Cherry Fruit

The black, shiny, smooth, globular fruit *of the best trees* has an unusual bittersweet, cherry-grapefruit flavor—somewhat strange at first, until you realize that you can't stop eating them!



Black Cherry Cut Open, With Seed

Half the volume of the fruit consists of a hard, round seed. You can cook the cherries in fruit juice with a sweetener, thickener, and sweet herbs, before straining out the seeds, to make a wide range of exotic-flavored desserts and sauces.



Black Cherry Bark

The smooth, silvery grey bark of the mature tree is fractured with cracks and adorned with horizontal streaks—*lenticels*, that help the trunk breath. [Black birch bark](#) is similar, but without all the cracks.

[Black Cherry Recipes](#)

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