PLANT FACT SHEET

Prunus cerasus L.

GENUS *Prunus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Sour cherry, Morello cherry, Pie cherry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Seeds - oil, Leaves - tea, Flowers, Sap, Gum

Fruit can be eaten raw. They are acidic. They are often cooked into pies, preserves, puddings, and canned. They produce a colourless juice.
The seeds yield an oil used in salads. The crushed seeds in a muslin bag are used to flavour jam.
The fruit are candied (crystallised) and also preserved in syrup or brandy. They are processed into jam. They are used for cherry brandy and liqueurs.
The leaves are used as a substitute for tea. They are also added to lacto-fermented cucumbers. And used for flavouring in pickles.

DESCRIPTION

A small deciduous tree. It grows 2-8 m high. It is a broad spreading shape. The bark is purple-brown and has orange lenticels across it. The leaves are oval and have a blunt point. They are 7.5 cm long by 5 cm wide. They are double toothed. The leaf stalks are without glands and are hairless. The buds are cone shaped. They are shiny reddish-brown. The flowers are white and in small long stalked clusters. These are on short leafy shoots. The flowers are 2 cm across. The fruit are 2 cm across. They are bright red to black.

HABITAT

It is a cold temperate plant. In the Indian Himalayas it grows between 3,000-3,500 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 3-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seeds or cuttings. It can also be grafted. They do not need to be cross pollinated.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit are often mechanically harvested by shaking.

NOTES

There are about 200 Prunus species. It is a tetraploid plant.

REFERENCES

Alrhmoun,M., et al, 2025, Diachronic changes in local food heritage: the ethnobiology of wild foods in central Tuscany. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine (2025) 21:48

Altschul, S.V.R., 1973, Drugs and Foods from Little-known Plants. Notes in Harvard University Herbaria. Harvard Univ. Press. Massachusetts. no. 1480 (As Prunus vulgaris)

Ambasta, S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 494

Bhatt, D., Chandra Sekar, K. and Kumar, K., 2020, Tree Diversity of Indian Himalayan Region. G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Almora, Uttarakhand, India. p 95

Bianchini, F., Corbetta, F., and Pistoia, M., 1975, Fruits of the Earth. Cassell. p 146

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 841

Bussman, R. W., et al, 2016, A comparative ethnobotany of Khevsureti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Tusheti, Svaneti, and Racha-Lechkhumi, Republic of Georgia (Sakartvelo), Caucasus. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine.

Bussman, R. W. et al, 2017, Ethnobotany of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Sakartvelo (Republic of Georgia), Caucasus. Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge Vol. 16(1) pp 7-24

Bussman, R. W., et al, 2021, Unity in diversity—food plants and fungi of Sakartvelo (Republic of Georgia), Caucasus. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine (2021) 17:72 p 14

Chamorro, M. F., & Ladio, A., 2020, Native and exotic plants with edible fleshy fruits utilized in Patagonia and their role as sources of local functional foods. BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies. 20:155

Cheifetz, A., (ed), 1999, 500 popular vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts for Australian Gardeners. Random House p 224

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1093

Denes, A., et al, 2012, Wild plants used for food by Hungarian ethnic groups living in the Carpathian Basin. Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae 81 (4): 381-396

Dolina, K. & Luczaj, L., 2014, Wild food plants used on the Dubrovnik coast (south-eastern Croatia) Acta Soc Bot Pol 83(3):175–181

Enum. pl. Transsilvaniae 954 (Index). 1866, nom. inval. (As Prunus vulgaris)

Ertug, F., 2000, An Ethnobotanical Study in Central Anatolia (Turkey). Economic Botany Vol. 54. No. 2. pp. 155-182 (Also as Cerasus vulgaris)

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 2. p 92

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 201

Farrar, J.L., 1995, Trees of the Northern United States and Canada. Iowa State University press/Ames p 375

Flowerdew, B., 2000, Complete Fruit Book. Kyle Cathie Ltd., London. p 50

Girard, N. J., 2020, Sustainable Foraging of Wild Edible Plants in Norway. A Biocultural Approach. M. Sc. thesis Norwegian University. p 135

Gonzalez, J. A., et al, 2011, The consumption of wild and semi-domesticated edible plants in the Arribes del Duero (Salamanca-Zamora, Spain): an ananalysis of traditional knowledge. Genetic Resources and Crop Evolution 58:991-1006

Glowinski, L., 1999, The Complete Book of Fruit Growing in Australia. Lothian. p 67

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 522

Heywood, V. H. & Zohary, D.,1995, A Catalogue of the Wild Relatives of Cultivated Plants Native to Europe. Flora Mediterranea 5 - 1995, p 395

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 241

Ijaz, S., et al, 2022, Traditional knowledge of wild edible plants used by the people of Lawat, District Neelum, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan. Ethnobotany Research and Applications 23:24

Irving, M., 2009, The Forager Handbook, A Guide to the Edible Plants of Britain. Ebury Press p 272

Jackes, D. A., 2007, Edible Forest Gardens

Jardin, C., 1970, List of Foods Used In Africa, FAO Nutrition Information Document Series No 2.p 156

John, L., & Stevenson, V., 1979, The Complete Book of Fruit. Angus & Robertson p 104

Kalle, R. & Soukand, R., 2012, Historical ethnobotanical review of wild edible plants of Estonia (1770s-1960s) Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae 81(4):271-281

Kargioglu, M., et al, 2008, An Ethnobotanical Survey of Inner-West Anatolia, Turkey. Human Ecology 36:763-777 (As Cerasus vulgaris)

Khan, D. & Shaukat, S.S., 2006, The Fruits of Pakistan: Diversity, Distribution, Trends of Production and Use. Int. J. Biol. Biotech., 3(3):463-499

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 1751, 1854

Ladio, A., Lozada, M. & M. Weigandt, 2007, Comparison of traditional wild plant knowledge between aboriginal communities inhabiting arid and forest environments in Patagonia, Argentina. Journal of Arid Environments 69 (2007) 695–715

Lazarides, M. & Hince, B., 1993, Handbook of Economic Plants of Australia, CSIRO. p 199

Little, E.L., 1980, National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees. Alfred A. Knopf. p 497

Lord, E.E., & Willis, J.H., 1999, Shrubs and Trees for Australian gardens. Lothian. p 67

Mabey, R., 1973, Food for Free. A Guide to the edible wild plants of Britain, Collins. p 171

Full reference list (34 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/3b51b644-49a2-43eb-9c6b-acfdad1095ad

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/3b51b644-49a2-43eb-9c6b-acfdad1095ad