PLANT FACT SHEET

Sorbus domestica L.

GENUS *Sorbus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Service tree, Sorb apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves - tea

The fruit can be eaten when very ripe. Fruit become sweeter after frost. They are also dried. They are used for jam.
The fruit can be fermented with grain to produce a cider-like beverage.

DESCRIPTION

A tree with spreading branches. It loses its leaves in the winter. It grows to 15 m high. The bark is orange-brown and scaly and rough. The leaves are alternate and compound. The leaves are 22 cm long. There are 11-21 leaflets along the stalk. They have rounded bases and sharp teeth along the edge. The buds are sticky. The flowers are 1.5 cm across. The flower heads are domed with a cluster of flowers and about 10 cm across. The fruit are small and pear shaped. It is yellow-green and flushed with red. They are 3 cm long. They are edible.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is native to S.W. Asia and S. Europe. It grows on mountain slopes and in deciduous forests. Mediterranean. It suits hardiness zones 6-10. Arboretum Tasmania.

PRODUCTION

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a slow growing tree.

NOTES

There are about 75 Sorbus species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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 (As Cormus domestica)

Arora, R. K., 2014, Diversity in Underutilized Plant Species - An Asia-Pacific Perspective. Bioversity International. p 87

Benitez, G., et al, 2023, Wild Edible Plants of Andalusia: Traditional Uses and Potential of Eating Wild in a Highly Diverse Region. Plants 2023, 12, 1218 p 25

Bianchini, F., Corbetta, F., and Pistoia, M., 1975, Fruits of the Earth. Cassell. p 136

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 939

Bonet, M. A. & Valles, J., 2002, Use of non-crop food vascular plants in Montseny biosphere reserve (Catalonia, Iberian Peninsula). International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition (2002) 53, 225–248

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 970

Cerne, M., 1992, Wild Plants from Slovenia used as Vegetables. Acta Horticulturae 318

Coombes, A.J., 2000, Trees. Dorling Kindersley Handbooks. p 276

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1356

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

Di Tizio, A., et al, 2012, Traditional food and herbal uses of wild plants in the ancient South-Slavic diaspora of Mundimitar/ Montemitro (Southern Italy). Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine 8:21

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

Egea, I., et al., 2010, Six Edible Wild fruits as potential Antioxidant Additives or Nutritional Supplements. Plant Foods for Human Nutrition. 65:121-129

Ertug, F, Yenen Bitkiler. Resimli Türkiye Florası -I- Flora of Turkey - Ethnobotany supplement (As Cormus domestica)

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 211

Flowerdew, B., 2000, Complete Fruit Book. Kyle Cathie Ltd., London. p 182

Glowinski, L., 1999, The Complete Book of Fruit Growing in Australia. Lothian. p 45

Hancer, C. K., et al, 2020, Traditional Knowledge of Wild Edible Plants of Biga (Çanakkale), Turkey. Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae / 2020 / Volume 89 / Issue 1 / Article 8914

Harris, E & J., 1983, Field Guide to the Trees and Shrubs of Britain. Reader's Digest. p 171

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 543 (As Pyrus sorbus)

Heywood, V. H. & Zohary, D.,1995, A Catalogue of the Wild Relatives of Cultivated Plants Native to Europe. Flora Mediterranea 5 - 1995, p 392

Irving, M., 2009, The Forager Handbook, A Guide to the Edible Plants of Britain. Ebury Press p 286

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

Jardin, C., 1970, List of Foods Used In Africa, FAO Nutrition Information Document Series No 2 p 161

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2014, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. On line draft. p 829

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 1853

Lentini, F. and Venza, F., 2007, Wild food plants of popular use in Sicily. J Ethnobiol Ethnomedicine. 3: 15

Lord, E.E., & Willis, J.H., 1999, Shrubs and Trees for Australian gardens. Lothian. p 73

Luczaj, L. et al, 2013, Wild food plants used in the villages of the Lake Vrana Nature Park (northern Dalmatia, Croatia). Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae, 82(4): 275-281

Luczaj, L., & Dolina, K., 2015, A hundred years of change in wild vegetable use in southern Herzegovina. Journal of Ethnopharmacology 166: 297–304

Miskoska-Milevska, E. et al, 2020, Traditional uses of wild edible plants in the Republic of North Macedonia. PHYTOLOGIA BALCANICA 26(1): 155–162, Sofia, 2020 p 159

Pardo-de-Santayana, M., et al, 2005, The gathering and consumption of wild edible plants in the Campoo (Cantabria, Spain). International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition. 56(7): 529-542

Pasta, S., et al, 2020, An Updated Checklist of the Sicilian Native Edible Plants: Preserving the Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Century-Old Agro-Pastoral Landscapes. Frontiers in Plant Science. Volume 11|Article 388

Pawera, L., et al, 2017, Traditional Plant Knowledge in the White Carpathians: Ethnobotany of Wild Food Plants and Crop Wild Relatives in the Czech Republic. Hum Ecol (2017) 45:655–671

Pieroni, A., 1999, Gathered wild food plants in the Upper Valley of the Serchio River (Garfagnana), Central Italy. Economic Botany 53(3) pp 327-341

Pieroni, A., et al, 2005, Food for two seasons: Culinary uses of non-cultivated local vegetables and mushrooms in a south Italian village. International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition, 56(4): 245-272

Full reference list (15 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/9b234d99-3379-4c3c-8199-c0c94f0c6003

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/9b234d99-3379-4c3c-8199-c0c94f0c6003