

Growing Bush Cherries

&

Cherry Trees in Montana



Bush Cherries and Cherry Trees are a welcome addition to any home landscape. Several hardy varieties have been developed. These fruit trees not only provide delicious and healthy fruit, but also are an attractive addition to the landscape with their nice form and display of beautiful white flowers in the spring.



Landscaping &
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Cherry Trees

Soil

Cherry trees perform best in a deep, fertile, well-drained, sandy loam soil. Fruit trees will not tolerate "wet feet", which makes them susceptible to root diseases. If your soil is heavy clay, it may be necessary to build up a small berm to plant the trees in.

Planting

Fruit trees need to be planted in a full sun location for optimum fruiting. Bare root trees should be planted in the spring. This is when bare root trees are most commonly available in nurseries. Containerized trees can be planted any time during the growing season. Most fruit trees are propagated by grafting or budding a desired variety onto a rootstock. This rootstock determines the size of the tree and its hardiness. The area at the base of the tree, called the graft union, must be about 6" above the ground after planting. If this graft union is buried, the tree will eventually deteriorate and die.

Fertilizing

It is not advisable to add fertilizer when planting. Young roots are easily burned and the tree may die back. However, after the first year use a complete fertilizer. Fertilizer stakes are easy to use and provide a slow release fertilizer throughout the growing season. Avoid using excess amounts of nitrogen fertilizer, which will promote lush green foliar growth, but will decrease the production of fruit or cause the fruit to split.

Pollination

The cherry trees that we carry are all self-pollinating varieties. However, fruit trees tend to bear more and higher quality fruit when there is another variety planted within 100 feet.

Insects and Diseases

Success in growing fruit trees depends on effective control of insects and diseases. Using dormant sprays in early spring, while the tree is still dormant, is an effective way to control insects and disease. Be sure to read and follow all directions. Some dormant sprays are for insects, some for fungus and some are all purpose sprays that combine fungicides with insecticides. Remember that it is always much easier to control insects and diseases than to treat them after they have damaged the tree.

Pruning

Pruning is the heart of good fruit tree management. Three kinds of pruning are training, maintenance and corrective.

Training is the process of giving desirable structure to fruit trees from 1 to 4 years after planting. This is done primarily to get the framework of branches located for convenience of harvesting and spraying. When a whip is planted, it should be headed at approximately 30 inches. All side limbs should be headed back to five buds or removed completely. On larger trees, 5 to 8 feet tall, all limbs lower than 2.5 to 3 feet should be removed entirely. No two limbs should arise at the same level on the trunk. Select limbs with a wide branching angle to the trunk or use spreaders to prevent narrow branch angles. Form additional scaffolds of 2 to 4 limbs at 18" to 24" intervals above the first.

Maintenance pruning is used to renew fruiting wood, increase fruit size, improve fruit quality by letting more light into the tree, increase the fruit set and remove dead or damaged wood.

Corrective pruning, which is often severe, is sometimes needed to reduce tree size and to correct or remove poor limbs. It is also used to rejuvenate trees that have been injured. Pruning can be done any time after the leaves fall in autumn and before bud break in the spring. Fruit trees can also be pruned during the summer to remove water sprouts, suckers and broken or damaged stems.

Varieties We Carry

Bali Cherry - Zone 3

- Blooms in early May and ripens in August.
- Fruit is dark red, 1" diameter and semi-sweet.
- Good for fresh eating.
- A very hardy tree.
- Self-fruitful, although 2 will give you added fruit.

Sweet Cherry Pie® - Zone 3

- Blooms in early May.
- Fruit is dark red and sweetest sour pie cherry ever sampled.
- Fantastic for jams, jellies, and pies.
- Self-fruitful, although 2 will give you added fruit.

Dwarf Sour Bush Cherries The Romance™ Series

Soil

Dwarf sour cherries prefer well-drained, sandy loam or loam soils, with a pH between 6.5 and 8.0. Cherries do not like wet feet, but thrive with consistent watering especially the first three years.

Planting

Plant in full sun. It is very important to keep perennial weeds away from them as they stunt the trees growth. It is important to add organic matter level between if you have clay or sandy soil. It is always a good idea to add cover mulch to the base of the tree to retain moisture and regulate temperature. Water them a few times deeply to get them established.

Fertilizing

It is not advisable to add fertilizer when planting. Young roots are easily burned and the tree may die back. However, after the first year use a complete fertilizer. Fertilizer stakes are easy to use and provide a slow release fertilizer throughout the growing season. Avoid using excess amounts of nitrogen fertilizer, which will promote lush green foliar growth, but will decrease the production of fruit or cause the fruit to split.

Pollination

These Bush Cherries are self-pollinating, meaning the flowers from the bush will pollinate each other although a second pollinating type of bush cherry could result in increased fruit set.

Pruning

Pruning excess growth from the center of the bushes in late winter/early spring is beneficial. Modest pruning can be done post-harvest on mature trees that have filled their space. See Cherry Trees Pruning for more information.

Size and Spacing

Size of dwarf sour cherries is dependent on several factors. While listed at 6 1/2 feet tall in zone 2, they can reach up to 8-12 feet in height in zone 4. Bush cherries require much less space than the tree types. Row spacing of 6 to 7 feet from center of plant to center of plant will allow easy access for harvest, and promote good air movement to help reduce disease incidence

Varieties We Carry

Carmine Jewel - Zone 2

- Blooms in early May and ripens early August.
- Compact and vigorous with few suckers.
- Fruit is dark red/black, small pits, tender and juicy.
- Consistently highly productive
- Good for fresh eating, canning, jam.
- Self fertile

Romeo - Zone 2

- Blooms similar to Carmine Jewel, but later
- Most compact and vigorous with few suckers.
- Fruit is dark red/black
- One of the best varieties for juice.
- Good for fresh eating and processing
- Self fertile

Juliet - Zone 2

- Blooms in early May and ripens early August.
- Compact and moderately vigorous with few suckers.
- Fruit is dark red with small pits
- One of the best fresh eating varieties
- High sugar content (up to 20 brix)
- Self fertile.

Recipes

Recipes courtesy of www.epicurious.com

Spice Tart Cherry Chutney

1 navel orange
3 cups fresh or frozen pitted tart cherries (about 2 pints fresh, picked over)
1 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons minced peeled fresh gingerroot
1/4 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon dried mint, crumbled
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon salt

With a vegetable peeler remove two 2-inch strips orange zest and cut into fine julienne strips, reserving orange for another use. In a heavy saucepan stir together all ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer mixture, stirring occasionally (stir more frequently toward end of cooking), about 50 minutes, or until thickened and syrupy. Cool chutney. Chutney keeps, covered and chilled, 3 weeks. Makes 1 1/2 Cups.

Sour Cherry Salsa

2 1/4 cups fresh or frozen pitted sour cherries (3/4 lb)
1 tablespoon sugar
3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion (1/2 small)
1 large fresh jalapeño chile, finely chopped, including seeds (1 1/2 tablespoons)
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1/2 teaspoon salt

If using fresh cherries, coarsely chop, then stir together with sugar in a small bowl until sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. If using frozen cherries, thaw in a small bowl, reserving any juices in bowl, then coarsely chop and stir together with sugar in same bowl. Stir in onion, jalapeño, lime juice, cilantro, and salt and let stand at room temperature 30 minutes for flavors to develop.



2025 2nd Ave. NW
Great Falls, MT 59404
Phone: 406-727-0950 Fax: 406-727-4817
Email: mail@forde-nursery.com
www.forde-nursery.com

