
HORTICULTURE
FACT SHEET No. 50—Revised 1981

(formerly Home Economics Fact Sheet No. 27)

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Minnesota's Wild and Edible Fruits

Wild fruits, found in many areas of Minnesota, may be used in food products including jam, jelly, syrup, and sauce.

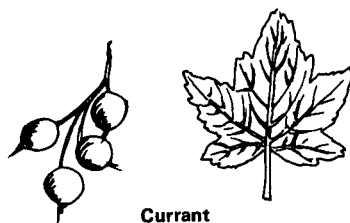
When picking wild fruits, use reliable publications to insure correct identification of the species you plan to use.


Blueberry

Raspberry

Blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*) — This is a low bush growing from ½ to 2 feet high. Found in sandy, dry, soil in open woods and clearings. The round, dark blue berries ripen in July and August. Uses include sauce, jam, jelly, and syrup.

Raspberry (*Rubus* sp.) — A low, arching, prickly shrub from 1 to 5 feet high. Found in thickets, clearings, borders of woods, and along roadsides throughout Minnesota. Raspberries ripen in July. Black raspberries' unripe fruit is at first bright red, later turning black and edible. Uses include jam, jelly, sauce, and syrup.


Currant

Currant (*Ribes* sp.) — This is a low shrub, 2 to 5 feet high with smooth stems except for the swamp black currant. Found in swamps, cool woods, and thickets. The fruit is very sour, round, smooth, and ranges in color from pink to dark red. It ripens in late June and July. Uses include jelly and jam.


Gooseberry

Juneberry

Gooseberry (*Ribes* sp.) — This is a low prickly stemmed shrub growing from 2 to 5 feet high. Found in swamps and on upland hills. The fruit is round, prickly, greenish-white to red-purple and ripens in late July and August. Uses include sauce, jam, and jelly.

Juneberry (*Amelanchier*) — Commonly known as Serviceberry or Saskatoon. This is a small tree or shrub with white 5-petaled blossoms and grows from 6 to 20 feet high. Found on the edges of woods, moist ravines, and in valleys. The fruit, which ripens in late June and July, is round (resembles a blueberry), red when young and purplish or almost black when mature. Uses include jam, jelly, and sauce, and it also makes a fine beverage.


Elderberry

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) — The common or American elderberry is a shrub growing from 4 to 12 feet tall. Found in moist soils along roadsides, ditches, streams, and in fields. It has creamy clusters of tiny star-shaped flowers that become round, purplish-black berries in late summer and early fall. The fruit is used for jelly, pies, and wine.



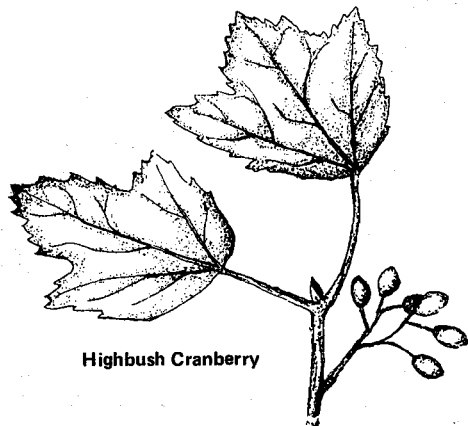
Wild Plum

Wild Plum (*Prunus americana*) — This is a shrub or small tree growing from 3 to 20 feet high. Found in thickets, along roadsides, pastures, riverbanks, and old farmsteads. The fruit has a sub-acid flavor, is round, red or yellow, and ½ inch to 1 inch in diameter. It ripens in August and September. Uses include sauce, pies, jelly, and preserves.



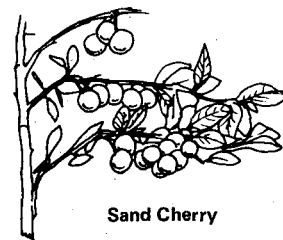
Choke Cherry

Choke Cherry (*Prunus virginiana*)¹ — This is a tall shrub or small tree growing up to 25 feet high. Found throughout Minnesota primarily along roadsides, edges of woods, and upland areas. The fruit is a round, dark-purple berry, with an exceedingly astringent taste when fresh. Ripens in July and August. Uses include jelly, syrup, pies, preserves, and wines.



Highbush Cranberry

Highbush Cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*) — This shrub despite its name is not a cranberry. Found in cool woods, thickets, and swampy moist areas and grows from 3 to 10 feet high. Its flowers are white, and the round to oblong, yellow to dark red berries contain one flat seed and ripen in September. Uncooked, the fruits are sour and bitter. Uses include sauce and jelly.



Sand Cherry

Sand Cherry (*Prunus sp.*)¹ — This is a small, bushy shrub growing from 1 to 5 feet high. Found on sandy, rocky situations throughout Minnesota. The fruit is a round, astringent, somewhat oblong purple-black berry, which ripens in July and August. Uses include sauce and wine.



Wild Grape

Wild Grape (*Vitis reperia*) — This is a vine that climbs high into trees with tendrils that wind around twigs. Found along streams or in damp, cool woods. The fruit is a cluster of round, juicy, very sour, dark blue berries that ripen in September and October. Uses include juice, jelly, and syrup. The leaves can be used for various middle eastern dishes like stuffed grape leaves.



Pin Cherry

Pin Cherry (*Prunus pennsylvanica*)¹ — This is a tall shrub or a small tree growing from 20 to 30 feet high with light reddish brown bark that is aromatic and bitter. Found in burned over regions or wooded areas. The berry is round, bright red, has sour, thin flesh, and contains a single seed or pit. It ripens in July and August. Uses include jelly, syrups, and wine.

Other Identification Publications:

- Using Wayside Plants*, Nelson-Coon
- Feasting Free on Wild Edibles*, Bradford Angier

For directions on using wild fruits, obtain a copy of *Using Minnesota's Wild Fruits*, Food Science and Nutrition Fact Sheet No. 25, University of Minnesota, Agricultural Extension Service.

¹When using choke cherries, sand cherries, or pin cherries, extract juice from these fruits without crushing the seeds. For directions, see FSN Fact Sheet No. 25, *Using Minnesota's Wild Fruits*.