

Cayuga Landscape

Ithaca, NY

Getting to Know Cherry Trees

Flowering vs. Fruiting

All cherry trees belong to the genus *Prunus*, and all produce abundant flowers in the spring. Some are grown just for flowers ('Yoshino', 'Kwanzan', 'Snow Fountain'), while others are grown for fruit ('Bing', 'Rainier', and 'Stella').



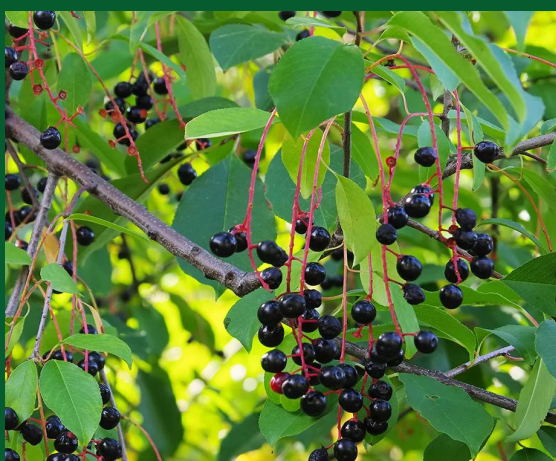
Sweet vs. Sour

Fruiting types are further categorized into sweet and sour cultivars. All sweet cherries ('Bing', 'Rainier') are *P. avium*, and sour cherries ('Montmorency') are hybrids with *P. cerasus*. Sweet cherries are self-incompatible except for select varieties ('Stella'), but all sour cherries are self-fruitful.



Native Option

While most cherries are native to Eastern Europe and Asia, the black cherry (*P. serotina*) is native to North America. It produces dark purple, almost black edible fruits that taste similar to sweet cherries.



Growing Conditions

Cherry trees require full sun and well-draining soils to thrive. Excessive moisture, particularly around harvest time, can cause sweet cherries to crack. Sour cherries are much more tolerant of the humid, rainy conditions of Upstate NY. Most cherries are grafted onto semi-dwarfing rootstocks with maximum heights of 15-25ft tall.

Source: Rieger, Mark. "Chapter 10: Cherry (*Prunus Avium*, *Prunus Cerasus*).” *Introduction to Fruit Crops*, Haworth Food & Agricultural Products Press, Binghamton, NY, 2006.