

Cherries and Plum - The Important Distinctions

		Pin Cherry <i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i>	Black Cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	Common Choke Cherry <i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Canada Plum <i>Prunus nigra</i>
B A R K	Texture	Nearly smooth. Large lenticels show orange when rubbed.	Young trunks -prominent white lenticels. Older trunks-fissured and ridged with transverse broad, flat plates, blocked appearance.	Slightly round even on small branches. Smooth with a pungent, disagreeable odor. Lenticels less prominent than on other Prunus species.	Lenticels yellowish.
	Color	Reddish brown.	Young trunks are black .	Grayish brown, with light colored fissures.	Dull reddish brown to black.
L E A V E S	General	Long and tapering from base to tip. Widest in the lower 1/3; thin and firm textured with rounded teeth. Glands on stalk, and no hairs on midribs.	Elliptic/oblong, widest in the center, thick leathery and shiny. Underside of midrib near stalk end covered with rusty, brown hairs. Glands on stalk near blade. Margin has rounded teeth.	Obovate, widest in the terminal 1/3, sharply saw-toothed and without hairs, medium leathery in texture, glands on stalk and no brown hairs on midrib.	Ovate or obovate tapering abruptly into a long thin point. Teeth rounded. Glands on stalk.
	Outline				
	Margin				
	Shape				
	Surface				

The twigs and branches of cherry and plum trees may be distorted by the 'black knot' fungus (*Dibotryon morbosum* (Schw.)Th. & Syd.).

Cherries and Plum - The Important Distinctions - (continued)

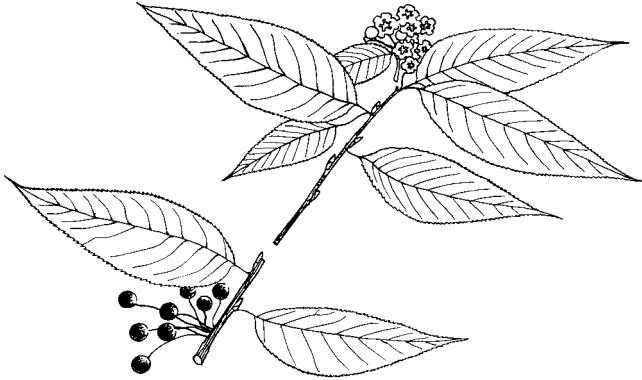
	Pin Cherry <i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i>	Black Cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	Common Choke Cherry <i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Canada Plum <i>Prunus nigra</i>
F	Color	Bright red .	Black.	Light red to yellow.
R	Size	¼ inch diameter.	½ inch diameter.	1 inch diameter.
U	Arrangement	Hang in umbelate or corymbose clusters.	Produced in a raceme, the individual fruit have a persistent basal disc.	Football shaped with a longitudinal furrow.
I				
T	Shape	Ovoid.	Ovate, flattened.	Cone shaped, pointed.
B	Color	Red brown.	Red brown with a lighter or greenish margin.	Gray brown.
U				
D	Shape or Texture	Very fine.	Waxy.	Thorns common on older twigs.
S	Color	Red or reddish brown.	Reddish brown.	Current growth gray, older growth darkening to black.
TW	Odor	Slight cherry odor.	Sharp pungent smell when broken.	None.
I				
G				
S				

PIN CHERRY

Prunus pensylvanica L. f.

Pin or fire cherry is a small tree, seldom growing taller than 25-30 feet in height and 6-10 inches in diameter. It has slender, horizontal branches and a narrow, somewhat rounded head.

It is common throughout the state, but has little value except as a protection and cover for the soil on recent clearings or burned areas.



The **bark** on the trunk of old trees is dark red-brown and broken into thin plates. Bark on young trees is smooth and reddish brown. The inner bark is slightly aromatic and very bitter. The large lenticels show orange when rubbed.

The **leaves** are alternate, narrow to oblong, widest in the lower third, rather sharp pointed, finely and sharply toothed on the edges, bright green and shiny above, without hairs below, 3-4 inches long, bitter and aromatic, with glands on petiole.

The **flowers** are white, in clusters of 4 or 5, and appear in May when the leaves are only half grown. The **fruit** is bright red, almost translucent, pea-sized, globular in shape, and ripens from the first of July to August. The **twigs** are shiny, reddish-brown and very slender. The buds are small, ovoid, reddish-brown and clustered at the end of twigs. They are commonly distorted by a black, warty, fungus growth called "black knot."

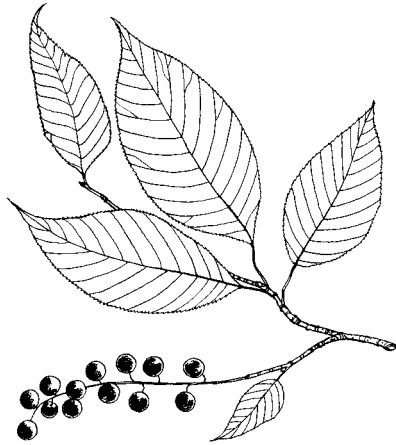
The **wood** is coarse-grained, soft and light. It is not used commercially. The gum is edible.

BLACK CHERRY

Prunus serotina Ehrh.

Black cherry is widely distributed throughout the state and is one of our most valuable timber trees, although not abundant in sufficient size. It grows on a variety of soils, but makes rapid and best growth on rich, moist land. It has a narrow head, small horizontal branches, and attains a height of 40-50 feet and a diameter of 10-20 inches.

The **bark** on the trunk is red-brown to black and rather shiny with prominent white lenticels on young trees. On older trees, the bark is broken into small irregular plates.



The **leaves** are alternate, elliptic, oblong, widest at the center, finely toothed, dark green, shiny, thick, somewhat leathery, and 2-5 inches long. The underside of the mid-rib near the stalk end is covered with rusty brown hairs.

The **flowers** are produced in many flowered racemes 4-5 inches long which appear the last of May or early June when the leaves are half grown.

The **fruit** is in drooping racemes, dark purple or almost black when ripe, pea-sized, and globular in shape. It ripens from June to October.

The **twigs** give off a pungent odor when broken and the bark has a bitter taste. They are commonly distorted by a black, warty, fungus growth called "black knot."

The **wood** is rather hard, close-grained, light, strong, and is easily polished. It is used for furniture and cabinet making, interior finishing, woodenware, veneer, and plywood.



COMMON CHOKECHERRY

Prunus virginiana L.

Common chokecherry, a shrub or small tree, occurs throughout the state especially along fence rows in farming communities. It occasionally is 25 feet high and 6 inches in diameter.

The **bark** is smooth, grayish brown, and disagreeably scented. It is usually marked by long, light colored fissures.

The **leaves** are alternate, dull, widest at the terminal one-third, 2-4 inches long, finely toothed on the edges, and at maturity are without hairs and medium-leathery in texture.



The **flowers** appear from the first of May to June on slender stalks in racemes.

The **fruit** ripens from July to September and is about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ inch in diameter, at first bright red, turning at maturity to a dark red or nearly black. Fruit slightly astringent, but edible.

The **winter buds** are strictly cone-shaped, slender and pointed with a definite purple and tan pattern on the scales. Side buds are not flattened as in black cherry.

The **twigs** have a strong, pungent, skunk-like odor when broken and are frequently distorted by a black, warty, fungus growth called "black knot."

The **wood** is heavy, hard, but not strong and is not used commercially.