

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.