



Prunus serotina

black cherry

Family Rosaceae

Origin Native

WIS Code FAC CoC 3



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DESCRIPTION

Medium to large tree (20 to 35 m tall), with long clear trunk, and black, rough cornflake-like scaly bark on mature trees. Twigs and branches are reddish brown and smooth, with a bitter almond odor from the scratched bark. Leaves are simple, alternate (6 to 15 cm long), lance-shaped with finely toothed margins. Upper leaf surfaces are shiny green and smooth, and lower surfaces are paler green with yellow-brown hairs along the mid-vein.

FLOWERS AND FRUITS

May; August to September. Flowers appear in spring, at the tips of branches, after the leaves are fairly developed. The small white flowers of five petals each are in long drooping stalked clusters. Fruits are fleshy, berry-like, purple to black drupes in hanging stalked clusters.

HABITAT

Wet to dry forests and woodlands, fencerows and old fields.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Prunus pensylvanica, pin cherry, has similar leaves but the flowers and fruit are in rounded clusters (not hanging clusters). *Betula lenta*, sweet birch, has similar leaves with finely toothed margins, but the broken twigs have a strong wintergreen odor (not bitter almond).



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Prunus serotina. flowers and fruit



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Prunus pensylvanica, flowers