

Plant Data Sheet

**Bitter cherry / *Prunus emarginata*****Range**

British Columbia and Vancouver Island south to southern California and east to Montana, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico (1)

Climate, Elevation

Cool, moist foothill, montane, or canyon habitats (2), low to middle elevations (3), from 45 m in the northern part of its range to 2700 m in southern California (4)

Local occurrence

Moist forest and along streams (2) disturbed sites

Habitat preferences

Open sandy or gravelly sites and stream banks, shade intolerant (5), sparse woods (2)

Plant strategy type/successional stage

Pioneer on logged areas (2), soon displaced by red alder (5), seral following clearcutting, burning, or grazing, and in second growth forest (2)

Associated species

Salix scouleriana, *Prunus virginiana*, *Amelanchier alnifolia*, *Rubus parviflorus*, *Holodiscus discolor* (1)

Collection restrictions or guidelines

Flowers bloom in April/May (5), fruit ripening occurs from July to September and seed dispersal from August through September (2)

Seed germination

Has embryo dormancy, an after-ripening period in the presence of oxygen and moisture necessary for germination, cold stratification at 5 C for 90-160 days helps germination (2)

Vegetative regeneration

Reproduces vegetatively by root crown and root sprouts (2)

Seed life

Remain viable in soil and duff for many years, can be stored for up to 1 year

Recommended seed storage conditions

Dry conditions (2)

Propagation recommendations

Bitter cherry should be propagated from seed for best results but will also establish if propagated from softwood stem or root cuttings. Bitter cherry should be planted in the fall or late winter to early spring as bare root, balled, or burlapped specimens (6)

Soil or medium requirements

Moist soils with good drainage, also on semi-shaded areas and on dry, exposed hillsides, grows best on loam and sandy loam soils (2)

Installation form

Young plants from seed

Recommended planting density

Care requirements after installed (water weekly, water once etc.)

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan

Roots may spread up to 15 m from the parent plant sending up adventitious shoots along their length, short lived, 30-40 years (2)

Sources cited

- (1) Esser, Lora L. 1995. *Prunus emarginata*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (2003, April). Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. Available: http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/pruema/distribution_and_occurrence.html
- (2) Esser, Lora L. 1995. *Prunus emarginata*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (2003, April). Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. Available: http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/pruema/botanical_and_ecological_characteristics.html
- (3) Pojar, J. and MacKinnon, A. 1994. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*. Lone Pine Publishing, Redmond, WA, USA.
- (4) Breen, P. 1999. Oregon State University, Horticulture, Landscape Plants, Images, Identification and Information. <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/prema.htm>
- (5) Washington State Department of Transportation. 2001. Environmental Affairs, *Prunus emarginata*, Bitter Cherry. <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/cao/culres/ethbot/m-p/PrunusE.htm>
- (6) Esser, Lora L. 1995. *Prunus emarginata*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (2003, April). Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. Available: http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/pruema/management_considerations.html

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