



Photo from USDA plants database

Plant Data Sheet: Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Range

Chokecherry is widespread and spans the breadth of Southern Canada to as far south as Texas.⁵

Climate, elevation

Since chokecherry is widespread it thrives in a variety of climates. Local Western and Black chokecherry varieties may be found at low to middle elevations.^{4,5}

Local occurrence (where, how common)

Chokecherry may be found north in the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound and south to California.⁴

Habitat preferences

Chokecherry survives in dry to moist soils, full sun to partial shade. It is intolerant of full shade.²

Plant strategy type/successional stage (stress-tolerator, competitor, weedy/colonizer, seral, late successional)

Chokecherry occurs widely, so it can establish in a variety of successional stages including post-disturbance invasion to climax ecosystems.⁵

Associated species

Chokecherry can be found associated with mixed conifer forest of cedar, hemlock, and Douglas fir.⁵

May be collected as: (seed, layered, divisions, etc.)

Chokecherry may be collected as seed. Also, seedlings under six feet tall may be salvaged.²

Collection restrictions or guidelines

Fruits are fully mature and ready for collecting from late August to September.²

Seed germination (needs dormancy breaking?)

Remove pulp by soaking, but not for too long so that the seeds are not damaged. The seeds may then be sown in the fall. For seeds not sown in the fall, seed dormancy may be broken by cold stratification for 3-4 months² at 36-41°F.⁵ Unstratified seeds may germinate within 60-120 days.⁵

Seed life (can be stored, short shelf-life, long shelf-life)

Seeds may survive 5-10 years when stored in sealed containers at 3-5°C.³

Recommended seed storage conditions

It is recommended that seeds be stored in refrigerators at 3-5°C kept in Ziploc bags or sealed containers.³

Propagation recommendations (plant seeds, vegetative parts, cuttings, etc.)

Seed propagation works well and is relatively easy.³ In addition, seedlings may be transplanted.²

Soil or medium requirements (inoculum necessary?)

Chokecherries require approximately 38 centimeters of annual precipitation. They can grow in soils ranging from very acidic to alkaline.⁵ However, it is recommended that they are sown in a well-drained, peat-like soil mix.³

Installation form (form, potential for successful outcomes, cost)

Young chokecherry cannot tolerate competition so they should not be transplanted until after 2-3 years of growth.⁵

Recommended planting density

Information on recommended planting density was not available.

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

Chokecherries require ample watering, at least 38cm annual precipitation.⁵

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan

Chokecherries can grow 4-6 meters¹ in 40-60 years.²

Sources cited

- (1) Hitchcock, C.L. and Cronquist, A. Flora of the Pacific Northwest. University of Washington Press, 2001.
- (2) Leigh, M. Grow Your Own Native Landscape. WSU Cooperative Extension, Thurston County, 1999.
- (3) Native Plants Propagation Protocol Database. www.nativeplantnetwork.org. Retrieved April 10, 2006.
- (4) Pojar, J. and MacKinnon, A. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Lone Pine Publishing, Vancouver, B.C., 2004.
- (5) USDA Forest Service. Fire Effects Information System. www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/index.html. Retrieved April 10, 2006.

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