

# Chokecherry



## Description:

The North American shrub known as Chokeberry had an extreme makeover once its nutritional profile was discovered. High in vitamin C and antioxidants, it is being touted as the healthiest fruit in the world. This new "superfood" was re-branded as Aronia (its scientific name), and it is now a common addition to juices and other health snacks. Typically a bit too astringent to eat raw, hence the original name, the fruit can easily be used in jams and jellies and even wines. It can also be made into syrup and tea. In the Forest Garden, it will attract beneficial insects, can withstand periods of drought, can be used as a windbreak and fruit-bearing hedge, and is strikingly beautiful most of the year.

## USING THIS PLANT

### Primary Uses:

Edible fruit - usually cooked. Some improved varieties are mild enough to be eaten raw (see Trivia above).

Preserved Fruit - jams, jellies, preserves, etc. (naturally high in pectin). Can also be dried and used in teas and pemmican.

Fruit Juice - if mixed in a 1:1 ratio with another juice that is naturally sweet (like apple juice), then no other sweetener is needed. Juice can be reduced with heat to make syrup.

Primary or adjunct flavor in wines, but likely could be used in beers and liquors.

Tea Plant (dried fruits are used)  
Fruit Leather

## Secondary Uses:

General insect (especially bees) nectar plant

Wildlife food plant, especially birds, in Winter

Wildlife shelter plant for small mammals and birds

Groundcover plant - Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), plant 3-4 feet (1 meter) apart

Ornamental Garden Plant

Drought-Resistant Plant - can withstand low water periods, but not extremely prolonged dry periods.

Windbreak species

Living Fence species

**Yield:** This varies dramatically on age, variety, and growing conditions, but a mature plant can average 22 lbs (10 kg) per year. Reports of almost 40 lbs (17 kg) per bush have been reported.

**Harvesting:** Autumn. Only harvest when fully ripe. Taste is better after a frost. A berry comb will greatly assist harvesting the small fruits.

**Storage:** Best when used fresh. Can be stored in a cool place (like a refrigerator) for up to two weeks.