

***Prunus emarginata*, Bitter Cherry**

General Botanical Characteristics

Prunus emarginata is a shrub or small tree that grows up to 25 feet tall. Its bark is reddish-brown or gray, with horizontal rows of raised pores (lenticels). The alternate leaves are deciduous, oblong to oval, 3" long, finely toothed, and rounded at the tip. There are generally 1-2 small glands at the base of the leaf blade. Bitter Cherry has 5 sepals and 5 white petals, numerous stamens (20), 1 pistil, and 2 ovules.



Seasonal Development

Bitter Cherry flowers are fragrant and bloom in April to May. It produces a bright red pea-sized fruit.

Distribution/Habitat

Bitter Cherry likes to grow in moist disturbed areas. Bitter cherry prefers open sandy or gravelly sites and stream banks.

Interesting Facts

- The fruits are edible, though disagreeable in flavor. They are best used in jams.
- The bark can be peeled from the tree and polished to a rich red.
- Strips of the bark have been woven into baskets.

References

Washing State Department of Transportation, November 2002,
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/environmental/programs/culres/ethbot/m-p/PrunusE.htm>

Photo from <http://waynesword.palomar.edu/images/cherry4b.gif>