

# *Prunus sargentii*: Sargent Cherry<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

With attractive bark, good fall foliage color, and delicate pink blooms, Sargent Cherry is highly recommended for the home and urban landscape. Growing at a moderate rate into a 25 to 40-foot-high, upright-spreading to rounded tree, Sargent Cherry makes an ideal shade tree, spreading as wide as it is tall and casting dense shade below. It is often grown with several multiple trunks or upright branches originating from the same position on the trunk ascending in a graceful fashion. This structure could be somewhat of a problem in ice-storms. Training to develop well-spaced branches along the trunk may help reduce this problem. The attractive cinnamon brown bark has a shiny, almost polished appearance with prominent lenticels arranged around the trunk. In late April or early May the one-inch-wide, pink to deep pink single blooms appear before the new red-tinged leaves unfold. The small, pea-sized fruits which follow are red, ripening to a dark purple in June and July. The fruits are considered inconspicuous due to their size and color but are easily found by birds who quickly devour them. The three to five-inch-long, shiny, dark green leaves take on various shades of orange, bronze, and red before dropping in late September, often well before other trees which are still green.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Prunus sargentii*

**Pronunciation:** PROO-nus sar-JEN-tee-eye

**Common name(s):** Sargent Cherry

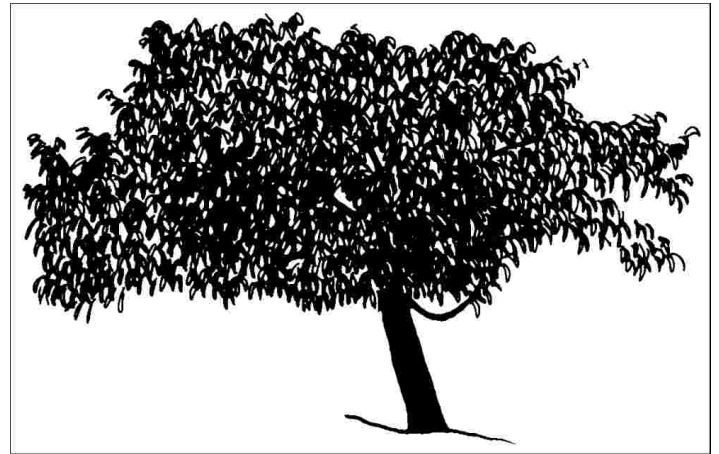


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Prunus sargentii*: Sargent Cherry

**Family:** *Rosaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5A through 8A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Uses:** shade; street without sidewalk; specimen; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

## Description

**Height:** 25 to 40 feet

**Spread:** 25 to 40 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical

**Crown shape:** vase, round

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Figure 2. Range

**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** fast  
**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** serrate  
**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval), obovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate, brachidodrome  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** red, copper, orange, yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** pink  
**Flower characteristics:** showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit covering:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** purple, black, red  
**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure  
**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage  
**Current year twig color:** reddish, brown  
**Current year twig thickness:** medium  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

### Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

### Other

**Roots:** not a problem

**Winter interest:** no

**Outstanding tree:** yes

**Ozone sensitivity:** sensitive

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

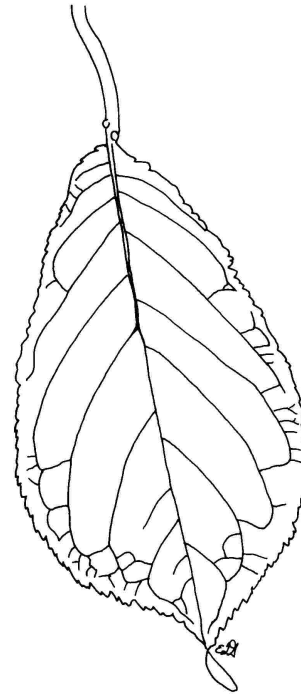


Figure 3. Foliage

## Use and Management

Sargent Cherry works well as a street tree (probably the best of the cherries for street planting) in areas which can accommodate the spreading canopy. It can be planted along the entry road to a subdivision or commercial landscape on 20-foot-centers or in the tree lawn space between the curb and sidewalk. It is also very effective as a specimen in the lawn or landscape bed.

Sargent Cherry should be grown in full sun on very well-drained, acid soil. Although it grows moderately fast and can reach up to 60 feet tall in the wild, it is relatively

short-lived with perhaps a 20-year lifespan, but provides reliable service during this period. Sargent Cherry requires little maintenance once established and is quite tolerant of drought and clay soil.

The cultivar `Columnaris' has a narrow, upright or columnar silhouette 30 to 40 feet tall by 15 feet wide and is very suitable for tight urban spaces, and along streets.

Propagation is by seed, grafting, or budding.

## **Pests and Diseases**

This cherry is bothered by tent caterpillars, aphids, borers, and scales. It is probably less susceptible to disease than most other cherries.