

## ***Prunus x incamp* 'Okame': 'Okame' Cherry<sup>1</sup>**

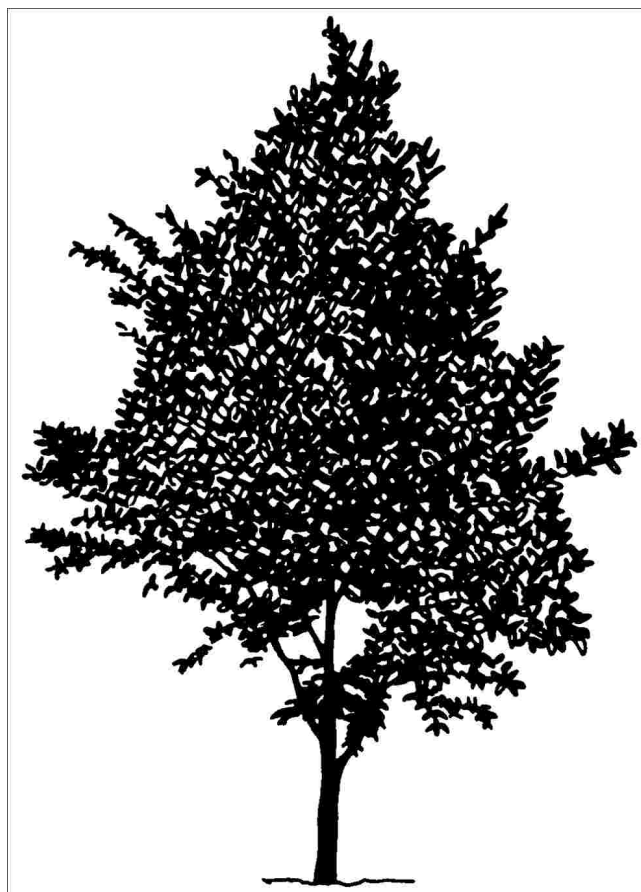
Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

This hybrid of *Prunus incisa* and *Prunus campanulata* grows quickly when young and forms a 15 to 20-foot-tall and 20-foot-wide upright, oval silhouette. The dark green, 1 to 2.5-inch-long leaves cast medium shade beneath the tree, and turn lovely shades of yellow, orange, and red in the fall in the northern part of its range. In late winter to early spring, the trees are gaily decorated with a multitude of single pink blooms with red calyces and reddish flower stalks, making them quite outstanding in the awakening landscape. The trunk is wrapped with prominent lenticels raised above the smooth reddish-bronze bark. 'Okame' Cherry is one of the most delicate and finest flowering trees available and one of the best for the deep south since it apparently has a low chilling requirement. It has been seen flowering in January and early February well into central Florida. Fall color is not showy in the southern part of its range but shows off nicely in the North.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Prunus x incamp*



**Figure 1.** Young *Prunus x incamp* 'Okame': 'Okame' Cherry

1. This document is ENH-680, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

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**Pronunciation:** PROO-nus x in-KAMP

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Common name(s):** 'Okame' Cherry

**Texture:** medium

**Family:** *Rosaceae*

### Foliage

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6B through 9B (Fig. 2)

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Leaf type:** simple

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Leaf margin:** serrate, double serrate

**Uses:** specimen; deck or patio; container or planter; screen; highway median

**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval)

**Availability:** not native to North America



Figure 2. Range

### Description

**Height:** 15 to 20 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical

**Crown shape:** upright/erect, oval

**Crown density:** moderate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate, brachidodrome

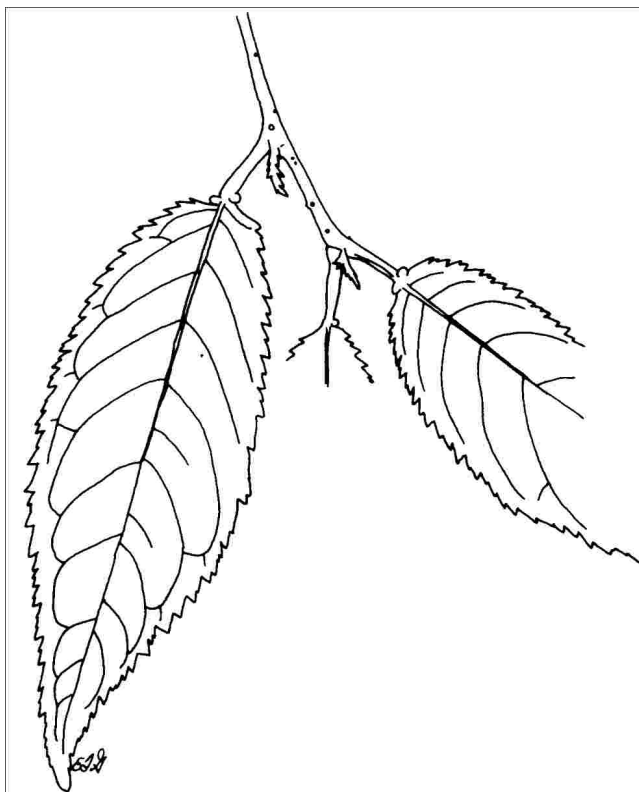
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow, orange, red, copper

**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower****Flower color:** pink**Flower characteristics:** showy**Fruit****Fruit shape:** round**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch**Fruit covering:** fleshy**Fruit color:** unknown**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem**Trunk and Branches****Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure**Breakage:** resistant**Current year twig color:** brown**Current year twig thickness:** thin, medium**Wood specific gravity:** unknown**Culture****Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun or partial shade**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained**Drought tolerance:** moderate**Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown**Other****Roots:** not a problem**Winter interest:** no**Outstanding tree:** yes**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible**Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases**Figure 3.** Foliage**Use and Management**

To produce a nice specimen tree, prune to thin out the canopy and open it up to allow for light to penetrate to interior foliage. Remove upright oriented branches in favor of those with a wider angle with the trunk to form a pleasing, spreading habit. A more upright shape can be created by removing lateral branches. Remove interior branches and space main branches along the trunk.

Use the tree along an entrance road to a commercial development planted on 20-foot centers or along side the patio or deck in the back yard. It also makes a nice small-scale court yard tree or specimen planted in the lawn or in bed of ground cover. It could be planted along a residential street where there is plenty of soil for root expansion. It is generally available in the industry.

'Okame' Cherry can be grown in full sun in clay, loam or sandy soil but benefits from irrigation in dry weather. The tree benefits from some afternoon shade in the southern part of its range. Propagation is by softwood cuttings.

### **Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern. It is occasionally bothered by canker worms which can almost completely defoliate the tree.

Aphids cause distortion of new growth, deposits of honeydew, and sooty mold.

Borers attack weakened trees. Keep trees healthy with regular fertilizer applications.

Scales of several types infest the cherries. Horticultural oil is used for some control of scales.

Spider mites cause yellowing or stippling but they are very difficult to see.

Tent caterpillars make large webbed nests in trees then eat the foliage. One defoliation may not be serious and small nests can be pruned out and destroyed. Use *Bacillus thuringiensis* when the insects are first seen and are still small.