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History Of The Cherry Tree

By Pat Malcolm

There are only a few instances in the ancient historical record concerning cherry trees. This

absence in the record perhaps resulted in the fragile nature and perishability of the fruit, unlike the fruit from the apple tree. There are strong suggestions that the cherry tree originated in the territories of Asia Minor near the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Other suggestions that the cherry trees were used in the Greek and Roman cultures come from literary historians, and it appears that cherry wood from the trees of cherry was important in many professional applications for the ancients.

Among the fruit seeds that were sent in 1628 to the settlement at Plymouth, Massachusetts, by the Massachusetts bay Colony were cherry, peach, plum, filbert, apple, quince, and pomegranate and "according to accounts, they sprung up and flourished."

William Bartram found bird cherry, *Prunus padus*, growing near Augusta, Georgia in 1773 as reported in his book, *Travels*, when he was taking an inventory of plants growing in the South after the Spaniards abandoned and ceded the land to the English.

Luther Burbank, two centuries later, believed that the bird cherry should be incorporated into the parentage of future cherry hybrids, because it was the most cold hardy cherry known; with its heavy bearing characteristics and its immunity to most insect and disease problems of the cherry trees already in commercial pipelines, it was the hardiest cherry tree yet.

In 1847, Henderson Lewelling brought to Oregon in a covered wagon "cherry trees, apples, pear, plum, and quince."

Luther Burbank, in his extensive book, *Fruit Improvement* in 1922, combined characteristics from the Sand cherry tree, *Prunus besseyi*, with the American plum, *Prunus chickasaw*, and the Japanese plum, *Prunus triflora*, that ripened in California around mid-August. Burbank described the fruit as deep crimson in color, transparent flesh, rich sweet flavor, juicy and firm with a strong resemblance of the parental form of the American plum, *Prunus chickasaw*. This cherry-plum hybrid was able to withstand the cold and rigorous climatic conditions, even to the Dakotas.

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Professor N.E. Hansen of the South Dakota Experiment Station developed and improved the Sand cherry, *Prunus besseyi*, that was marketed as the "Improved Dwarf Rocky Mountain Cherry," with fruit growing as large as the Richmond cherry. Luther Burbank argued in his 1922 book, *Fruit Improvement* page 149, that this Sand cherry tree was more truly a plum tree.

Cherries are usually marketed with the stem still attached to the fruit. When canned or preserved, the stems are customarily removed from the cherry. Hybridizers such as Luther Burbank concentrated on improving several characteristics that were important in marketing the fruit: the size, color, flavor, and sweetness. Burbank produced one cultivar so rich in sugar and it hung on the tree, instead of the rapid decay, after ripening on the tree as experienced with most cherry cultivars.

Cold hardiness was considered to be very important in cherry tree hybridization and Burbank used the bird cherry, *Prunus pennsylvanica*, that had withstood temperatures of negative 60 degrees Fahrenheit near Hudson Bay as one parent of the cherry hybrid, since it was considered to be the most cold hardy

of all cherry trees. In considering the many disease and insect problems that cherries experienced, Burbank suggested that hybridizers concentrate on breeding immunity genes into cherries to bypass "spraying and gassing." Burbank is greatly admired for his strong environmental stand by modern day conservationists.

The common wild black cherry, *Prunus serotina*, is found growing in most of Eastern North America. The small cherries are grown in great abundance and are reliably produced in large crops, even in the coldest regions of the United States. There are efforts to hybridize the desirable genes of this cherry into existing clones of commercial cherry cultivars. The problem with this native cherry tree is that all parts of the tree and fruit contain the deadly toxin cyanogens, which have caused death and illness to children from cyanide poisoning in the fruit, even though birds don't appear to be affected from eating the fruit.

Cherry trees in orchard situations grow 10 to 15 feet tall to manage the fruit harvesting properly, even though they can grow to 30 feet if not pruned. Cherry trees are very cold hardy down to negative 20 degrees Fahrenheit, and require approximately one thousand or more chill hours for an abundant fruit set. Pollination is not a great problem with cherry tree production. Rootstock selection for cherry trees is "Mazzard," *Prunus mahaleb*, or "Gisela" or the recent Geissen, German rootstocks.

The principal cherry commercial fruits grown in the United States are the sour cherries, *Prunus cerasus* L., that make up 99% of all production. These cherries are important in baking cherry pies and cherry tarts, as well as in frozen fruit packs or in canning.

The most famous sour cherry is the "Maraschino" cherry that is used in cherry pies, cakes, juices, jams, jellies, mixed drinks, ice cream, and a host of other ways. This cherry is bright red in color and commonly seen on grocery store shelves in clear glass jars and bottles.

Sweet cherry cultivars, *Prunus avium* L., are increasingly in demand and sold at U.S. markets. Bing cherries are well known as a fresh fruit item. This cherry is dark purple-red and is firm and has excellent shipping qualities. Other important sweet cherries are 'Napoleon' and 'Ranier,' a USDA

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release that is bright red with yellow undertones in the background. The Lambert cherry is good to use in canning as is the Stella. The Black Tartarian cherry is a sweet cherry commonly available from mailorder and internet catalogs.

Cherries are rated high in antioxidant levels that offer great health benefits such as treating Gout. Many internet sites promote fresh cherry consumption as being the miracle cure and fast recovery from attacks of Gout. Some internet sites offer concentrated cherry extracts and powders of dried cherries as a cure. Cherries offer other health benefits in their high content of Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin C, Niacin, and the minerals Calcium, Phosphorus, Iron, and Potassium.

Japanese flowering cherry trees are the most widely adapted and popular flowering tree growing in the United States today. The multi-colored flowers of Yoshino cherry, *Prunus x yedoensis*, and Kwanzan cherry are seen early in the season, and the buds open into clusters of abundant, long lasting flowers that dominate the landscape of our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C. Japanese flowering cherry trees *Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan' were planted in Washington D.C. as a gift of the Japanese people to American citizens, largely through the efforts of President Taft's wife, the first lady. Thousands of these Japanese cherry trees were planted, and many tourists flock to the Capitol in the spring to experience that flowering extravaganza. Cherry blossom festivals, celebrations, and get-togethers are held yearly in cities throughout the country, when cherry trees are in flower to crown "Cherry Queens" and to

schedule beauty pageants.

The most popular Japanese flowering cherry trees are *Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'; Akebono Cherry, *Prunus x yedoensis* 'Akebono'; Weeping Japanese Cherry, *Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula*; Takesimensis cherry, *Prunus takesimensis*; Usuzeumi Cherry, *Prunus spachiana* f. *ascendens*; Autumn Flowering Cherry, *Prunus subhirtella* var. *autumnalis*; Sargent Cherry, *Prunus sargentii*; Fugenzo Cherry, *Prunus serrulata* 'Fugenzo' and Okame Cherry, *Prunus* 'Okame'.

Patrick A. Malcolm, owner of TyTy Nursery, has an M.S. degree in Biochemistry and has cultivated fruit trees for over three decades.

<http://www.tytyga.com>

Cherry Tea From the Cherry Tree

By Angelique Watkins

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The information shared in this article does not replace your doctor's advice. Always seek professional help.

God Is Real and Recovery is of God.

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Genesis 1:29 and 30

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every living thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat; and it was so.

John Eddie"JJ"Jones SVP PacificRimDGroup sharing about his family.

My late Mother Mrs. Louella Tidwell Jones lived another 33 years from 1967 until June 29, 2000 after her diagnosis with Type 2 Diabetes, without ever having to take a shot of insulin or take any other type of medication.

My Dad's Grandmother Mrs. Mattie Hearn Jones, a full-blooded Chickasaw Indian, told my mother of an Indian remedy for the "Sugar" as she called it. Simply brew some "Cherry" leaf, bark or limb tea and drink it instead of or in addition to drinking Lipton Teas. The Cherry fruit is very sweet, but the brew from the "Cherry" leaf, bark or limb is very bitter. Drink it hot and as the tea circulates through your blood stream, the opposites of sweet and bitter attracts and empties out of your body as a bodily waste fluid.

My eighty-five year old God-Mother is recovering from a high blood pressure induced stroke in 1996. From drinking her "Cherry" tea each day, her blood sugar level maintains within 90-140, and the swelling in her ankles is totally gone relieving the fear of possible feet amputations. After a total blood work-up, her doctor has reduced her insulin intake to as needed, instead of automatically twice daily.

Anyway, my Mother's home in Memphis, Tennessee had 3 Cherry trees on the property, so we never threw away any of the leaves. We simply bagged them and saved them until she brewed them into Cherry Tea. But today, there is a Gourmet Cherry Tea from Lindsay Gardens Fine Teas, located at 297-101 Kinderkamack Road #178, Oradell, New Jersey 07649.

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