

Chokecherry



Rose Family

Prunus virginiana

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RELATIVES

Strawberry, Rose, Raspberry, Serviceberry, Mountain Mahogany and more

EASY IDENTIFICATION

Unique flower clusters; red berries turn dark purple when ripe; leaves rounded and finely-toothed



Leaf The leaves are finely-toothed, but look smooth at first glance.

LONG FLOWER Chokecherry flowers look like long, fluffy caterpillars. These flowers begin blooming in late May, just as Serviceberry flowers begin to fade.

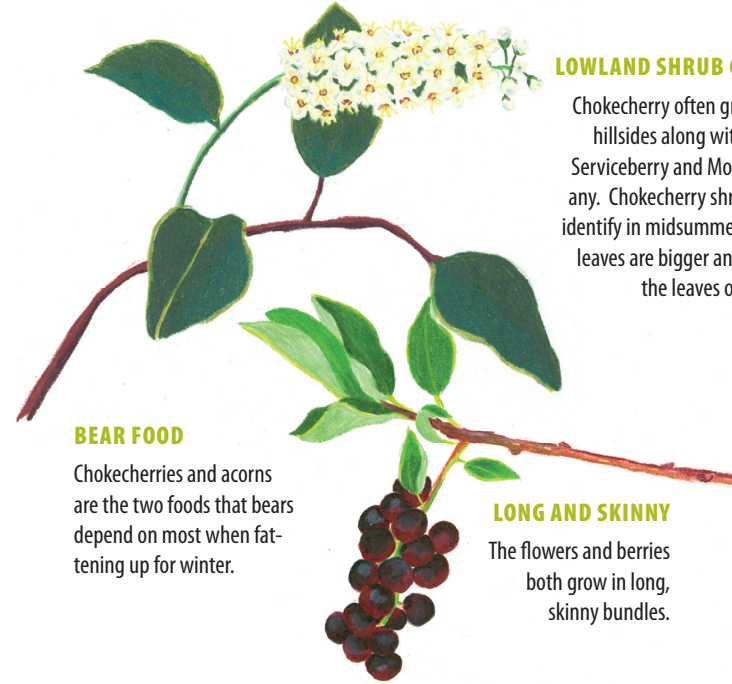
CHOKECHERRY JAM Chokecherries ripen in mid to late August. When ripe, they are very dark in color and grow in long, slender clusters that are the same shape as the flower. They taste very bitter straight from the branch, but with a few heaps of sugar, they are a favorite for making jams and jellies. Following is one chokecherry jam recipe: Remove stems from Chokecherries and wash. Add 1 Cup water to every 4 Cups of fruit. Place over low heat and simmer until fruit is tender, stirring occasionally. Rub pulp through a strainer. Measure this pulp and add an equal amount of sugar. Place over moderate heat and stir until sugar has absorbed. Bring to a rolling boil and cook until the mixture sheets off the spoon. Stir frequently. Pour into sterile jars, leaving 1/4" empty space at the top. Wipe jar rims, adjust lids and rings. Place sealed jars in boiling water for 10 minutes.

WILDLIFE LOVE 'EM TOO Butterflies, moths and bees love the sweet smelling flowers in spring. Bears depend on a good crop of Chokecherries to fatten up in fall before their winter hibernation. Birds eat ripened berries and any leftovers that remain in early winter. Deer and elk browse on Chokecherry twigs in winter.



FALL COLORS

Leaves turn pink to red in fall making some of the brightest leaves on the lowland shrub hillside contrasting with yellow and orange Serviceberry and the browns and maroons of Gambel Oak.



BEAR FOOD

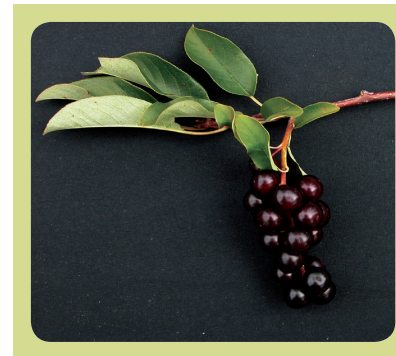
Chokecherries and acorns are the two foods that bears depend on most when fattening up for winter.

LONG AND SKINNY

The flowers and berries both grow in long, skinny bundles.

LOWLAND SHRUB COMMUNITY

Chokecherry often grow on hot, dry hillsides along with Gambel Oak, Serviceberry and Mountain Mahogany. Chokecherry shrubs are easy to identify in midsummer because their leaves are bigger and rounder than the leaves of its neighbors.



Berry Berries are bright red then darken as they become ripe. They taste very bitter!



Flower Chokecherry flowers are easy to identify by their long, slender clusters of tiny flowers.