



Prunus x incamp 'Okame' 'Okame' Cherry¹

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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 (Fig. 1). 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* 'Okame'

Pronunciation: PROO-nus x in-KAMP

Common name(s): 'Okame' Cherry

Family: *Rosaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

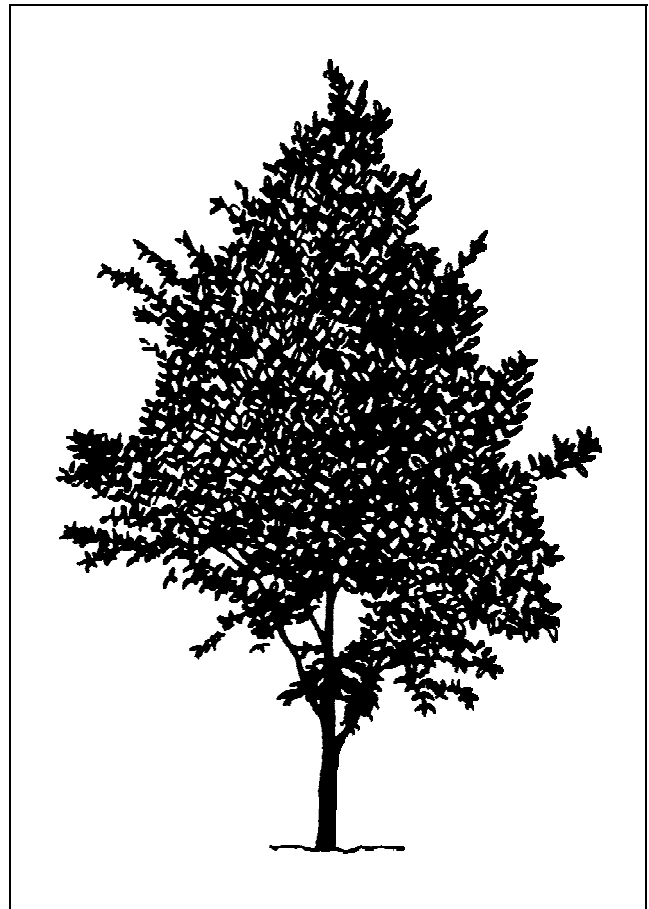


Figure 1. Young 'Okame' Cherry.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet
Spread: 15 to 20 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: oval; upright
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage

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

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; rare

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

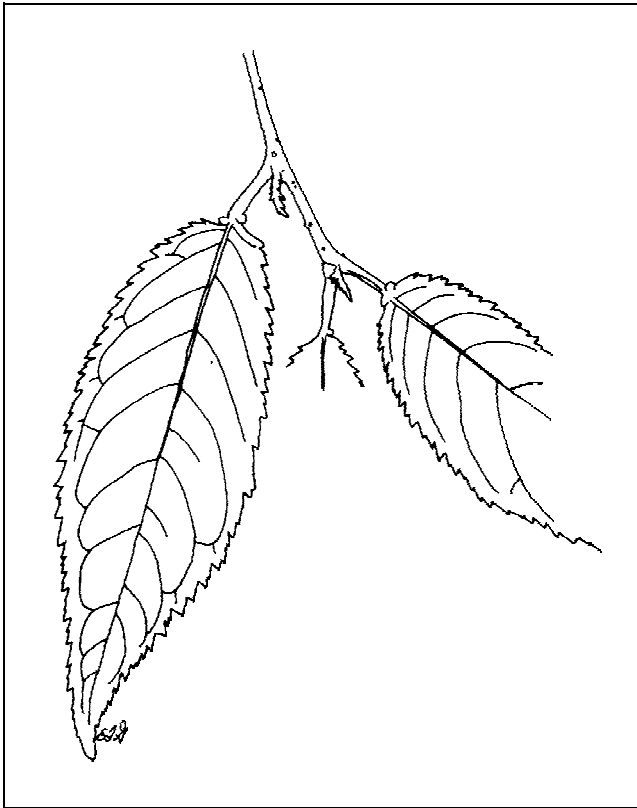


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Okame' Cherry.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

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.