



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

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

### INTRODUCTION

With attractive bark, good fall foliage color, and delicate pink blooms, Sargent Cherry is highly recommended for the home and urban landscape (Fig. 1). 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  
**Family:** *Rosaceae*

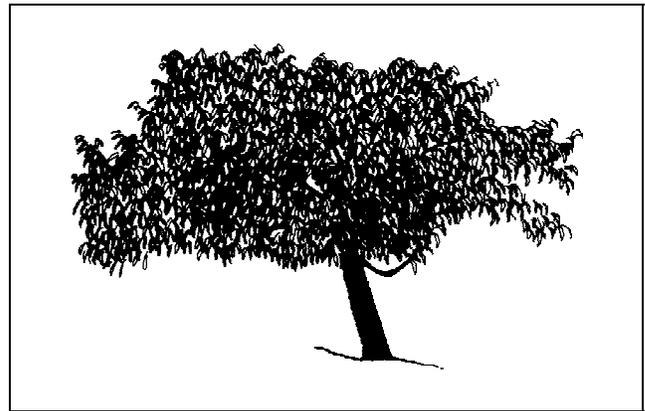


Figure 1. Middle-aged Sargent Cherry.

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

**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 canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-514, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
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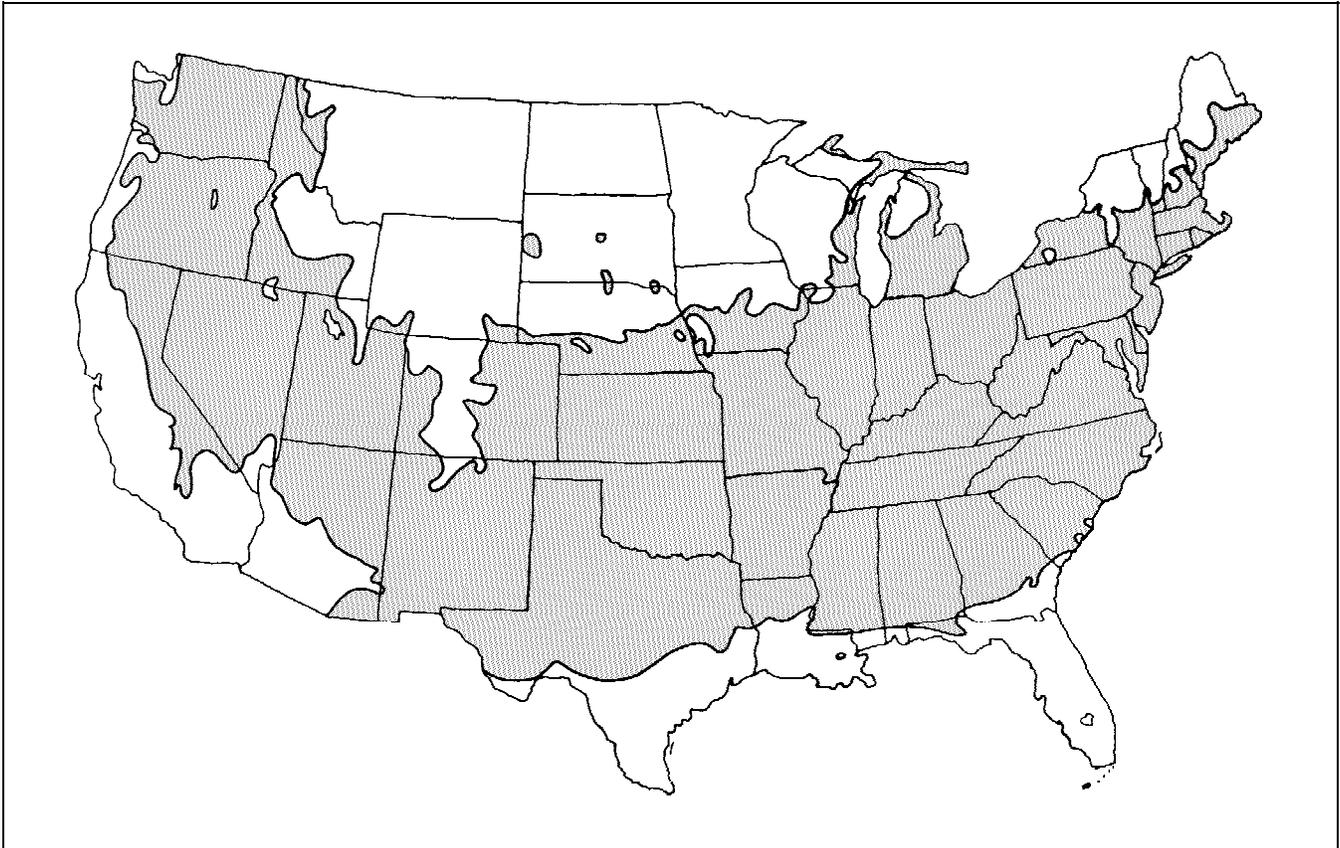


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Crown shape:** round; vase shape

**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:** banchidodrome; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches; 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

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** < .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** black; purple; red

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

**Current year twig color:** brown; reddish

**Current year twig thickness:** medium

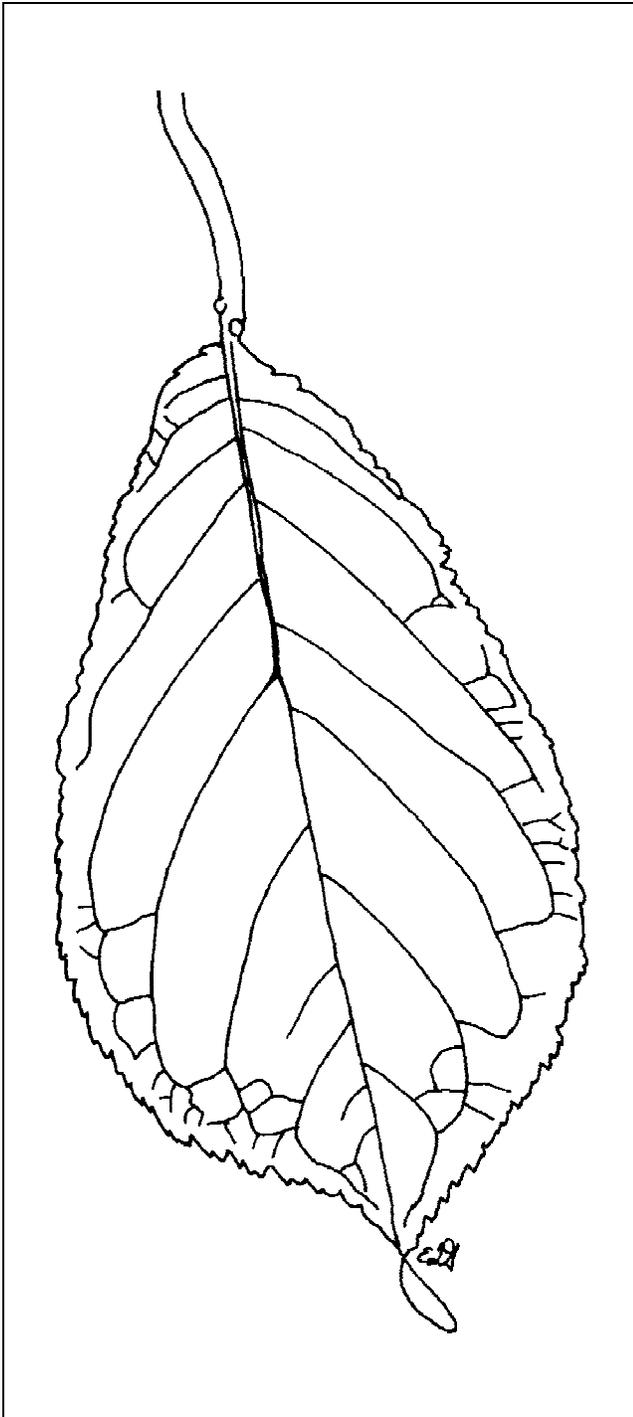


Figure 3. Foliage of Sargent Cherry.

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt 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  
**Ozone sensitivity:** sensitive or moderately tolerant  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### 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.