

# Gathering and Growing Edible Fruits and Nuts

Gathering wild foods from the woods and environment is a common practice in many cultures today. Minnesotans are showing an increased interest in harvesting wild food, along with growing their own food, and purchasing locally grown foods. This publication provides a list of wild fruits and nuts that can be gathered in the woodlands of Minnesota and/or purchased and planted in your yard to provide food and enjoyment.

## GATHERING

**Forest farming** is one of five Agroforestry practices. (Windbreaks, Alley Cropping, Riparian Forest Buffers, Silvopasture and Forest Farming). <http://nac.unl.edu/practices/forestfarming.htm>

**Non-timber forest products (NTFPs)** is a term used to discuss edibles, medicinals, crafts and decoratives. These products can be used personally or can be used to generate income and form small businesses. Business examples include: wild ginseng, wild rice, wild crafting and evergreen boughs.

**Permission to harvest:** Individuals and families harvesting edibles and decoratives in a Minnesota State Forest or Park for home use do not need a state permit. However, harvesting edibles and decoratives which will be sold requires a state permit <http://z.umn.edu/mnpermitlaws>. Within a state park, collecting, harvesting, or taking a tangible object for resale or commercial use is prohibited, except by written permission of the commissioner. Harvesting wild rice on bodies of water totally enclosed within a state park boundary is prohibited except by written permission of the commissioner. Collecting or possessing naturally occurring plants in a fresh form at state parks is prohibited, with the exception of edible fruit and mushrooms, both of which may be harvested for personal, noncommercial use (<http://z.umn.edu/mnmushroomlaws>).

Permits can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry offices, ([www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/forestry/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/forestry/index.html)) forestry offices of the Chippewa and Superior National Forests, DNR Division of Parks and Trails (<http://z.umn.edu/mnparks>) tribal headquarters on reservation lands, and county land management offices. (Not all sites allow gathering.)

An excellent wild gatherers resource is the **Minnesota Harvester Handbook** which addresses sustainable natural resource harvest and markets. This resource was developed by the University of Minnesota Extension and many contributors. It demonstrates the breadth and diversity of natural resources found in and around the state's woodlands. Copies can be purchased at the Minnesota Bookstore, <http://z.umn.edu/mhh>.

## GROWING FRUITS AND NUTS IN HOME LANDSCAPES

There are many species of trees and shrubs that produce fruits and nuts that can be planted in home landscapes. Shrubs are smaller and preferred when space is limited.

The list of fruits and nuts in this fact sheet is not complete but gives resource information about plants that could be planted in home landscapes. Select cultivars with appropriate cold hardiness for the planting site. Additional fruits that are not listed include: raspberries, strawberries, apples, and grapes.

### Web Sites

University of Minnesota	Fruit	<a href="http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/fruit/">www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/fruit/</a>
University of Saskatchewan-Saskatoon	Fruit	<a href="http://www.fruit.usask.ca">www.fruit.usask.ca</a>
Cornell University	Minor Fruits	<a href="http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/mfruit/">www.fruit.cornell.edu/mfruit/</a>
University of Georgia	Minor Fruits	<a href="http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B992">http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B992</a>
University of Wisconsin	Minor Fruits	<a href="http://uncommonfruit.cias.wisc.edu">uncommonfruit.cias.wisc.edu</a>
MN Dept of Natural Resources	Native Plant Encyclopedia	<a href="https://webapps8.dnr.state.mn.us/restoreyourshore">https://webapps8.dnr.state.mn.us/restoreyourshore</a>
University of Minnesota	Agroforestry	<a href="http://www.extension.umn.edu/agroforestry">www.extension.umn.edu/agroforestry</a> <a href="http://www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu">www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu</a>
National Agroforestry Center, USDA	Agroforestry	<a href="http://nac.unl.edu">http://nac.unl.edu</a>
eXtension	Forest Farming	<a href="http://www.extension.org/forest_farming">www.extension.org/forest_farming</a>

## EDIBLE FRUITS AND NUTS FROM TREES AND SHRUBS (FOR HOME LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS):

Trees/Shrubs	Scientific Name	MN Native	Pollinator Friendly	Zone	Comments	Height	Width
Apricot	<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>		X	4-8	Needs 2 varieties for cross pollination	12-18'	10-15'
Blackberry	<i>Rubus</i> spp.	X	X	5-8		3-5'	6-20'
Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.	X	X	3-7	Needs pH 4.0-5.5; 2 varieties best	5'	3'
Buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	X	X	2-7	Needs 1 male to pollinate 1 or more females	3-13'	5-8'
Cranberry, Highbush	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	X	X	3-7		3-10'	3-6'
Cherry, Nanking	<i>Prunus tomentosa</i>		X	3-6		6-8'	6-10'
Cherries, Dwarf Sour	<i>Prunus kerrasis</i>		X	2-5	<a href="http://www.fruit.usask.ca/articles/cherries.pdf">www.fruit.usask.ca/articles/cherries.pdf</a>	6-7'	6-7'
Cherry, Tart	<i>Prunus cerasus</i>	X	X	4-7		10-12'	15-20'
Chestnuts	<i>Castanea mollissima</i> – (Chinese)		X	4-9	(Typically Chinese Chestnut) Requires slightly acidic and well-drained soil	40-60'	50'
Chokeberry, Black	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	X	X	3-7	Also known as Aronia Berry (domestic cultivars: <i>A. mitschurinii</i> )	5-7'	5-7'
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	X	X	2-7		5-15'	6-10'
Currant, Black	<i>Ribes nigrum</i>		X	3-5	(European = <i>nigrum</i> )	3-5'	3-5'
Currant, Red	<i>Ribes rubrum</i>		X	3-5		3-5'	3-5'
Currant, White	<i>Ribes</i> spp.		X	3-5		3-5'	3-5'
Gooseberry	<i>Ribes hirtellum</i>	X	X	3-8	(Most available varieties are American x European hybrids)	2-5'	3-5'
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus</i> spp.	X	X	3-8	Select cultivars being tested in MN (may grow but not ripen in Zone 3) (Black is edible)	6-10'	6-12'
Hazelnut	<i>Corylus americana</i>	X	X	3-9	Bush-type, select cultivars being tested in MN	4-12'	3-8'
Hickory	<i>Carya laciniosa, C. cordiformis, C. ovata</i>	X	X	4-8	Shellbark for uplands, Bitternut, Shagbark for lowlands	60-80'	50'
Honeyberry	<i>Lonicera caerulea</i>		X	2-7	Needs 2 compatible varieties, <a href="http://www.fruit.usask.ca/haskap.html">www.fruit.usask.ca/haskap.html</a> Birds and powdery mildew can be problems	3-5'	3-5'
Juneberry	<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	X	X	2-5	(Serviceberry and Saskatoons) Shrub or tree forms	5-15'	10-40'
Jostaberry	<i>Ribes nidigrolaria</i>		X	3-8		6'	4-8'
Hardy Kiwifruit	<i>Actinidia kolomikta</i>		X	3-9	Needs 1 male to pollinate 1 or more females. May not fruit in zone 3.	15-20'	20-25'
Korean Pine	<i>Pinus koreansis</i>			3-7	Pine nuts, resembles white pine		
Lingonberry	<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	X	X	2-7	Needs pH 4-5.5	2-16'	1-3'
Nannyberry	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	X	X	2-8	Prefers moist soil	10-15'	6-12'
Paw-Paw	<i>Asimina triloba</i>		X	5-8	Needs 2 varieties	15-20'	15-20'
Peaches	<i>Prunus persica</i>		X	4-9		24'	15'
Pear	<i>Pyrus</i> spp.		X	3-9	Fireblight resistant; need 2 varieties for best production	10-40'	15-20'
Plum	<i>Prunus</i> spp.	X	X	4-9	Hybrids need 2 compatible varieties; European plums are self-fertile	12-20'	8-15'
Walnut, Black	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	X	X	4-6	High quality nuts require selected cultivars	100-150'	60-120'

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(**Pollinator Friendly:** Includes pollinator plants and host plants used not just for pollen and nectar sources)

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Books by Lee Reich: “Landscaping with Fruit” and “Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden” (Workman Publishing). [www.leereich.com](http://www.leereich.com)