

## WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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### Bitter Cherry (*Prunus emarginata*)

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#### Distribution

Bitter Cherry grows throughout Washington at low to mid-elevations. In western Washington, it is often a component in coastal forests and in eastern Washington it is often found in Ponderosa Pine forests.

#### Growth Habit

It typically grows as a deciduous upright tree, occasionally reaching 30 feet tall, but can occur in a shorter bushier form. White to pinkish flowers bloom in late spring and give rise to bright red, bitter berries.

#### Adaptability

Bitter Cherry is adaptable to a wide range of conditions throughout its range. It can be found growing in soils that range from wet to dry and sites that vary from shady to exposed. It is commonly found growing equally well as an understory species in mixed species woodland, or as a pioneering species in open disturbed areas.

#### Comments

- Its temptingly bright red cherries that are produced in mid-summer are incredibly bitter. Many species of birds, bears, and rodents consider it an important food source. Its stems and leaves are also good browse for deer and elk.
- It is also an attractive native flowering tree for home landscapes.
- Mature trees growing in a favorable site can produce a mass display of clusters of white fragrant flowers in the spring.
- Intermediate aged trees produce a glossy red bark that stands out in winter when all else is defoliated.

