



BLACK CHOKEBERRY (ARONIA MELANOCARPA)
RED CHOKEBERRY (ARONIA ARBUTIFOLIA)

SHRUB FACTS

Aronia is a **woody, perennial shrub native to the swampy woodlands of eastern North America** that produces clusters of red or dark purple, dime-size berries in late summer and early fall. When eaten **raw, the berries can be very drying, sour and bitter** -- hence their **common name 'chokeberry.'** *But don't let the name fool you!* Studies show these berries are a superfruit containing more antioxidants than any other berry, including blueberries, pomegranate, acai, goji, or mangosteen! Aronia belongs to the rose (**ROSACEA**) botanical family, which also includes fruits such as cherries, apples, and pears. **Depending on the cultivar, it can grow to be 10 ft tall and 6 ft wide**, although must grow into open, rounded shrubs with some degree of suckering. Aronia plays an important role in indigenous traditions and foodways with various uses in food, teas, and as a dye. It's frequently found in urban settings as an ornamental shrub because of its beautiful, white spring blossoms and fire-red-orange foliage that develops in the fall.

SEASONAL CARE

Aronia is a hardy plant that can survive between **zones 3-9**. It can tolerate wet and dry soil and a wide range in temperatures. Tolerant of partial shade, it requires half a day of full sun for a good crop of berries. This native plant is relatively pest and disease resistant. **Aronia is self-fertile and will produce berries as a single plant.** *A. melanocarpa* is said to possess more medicinal properties; while *A. arbutifolia* lends itself more to culinary use.

WINTER/SPRING: Pruning is not necessary but can be done in the plant's dormant period.

As with most perennials, aronia will be most successful planted in fall or early spring.

SUMMER: Water 2x a week the first summer till the new roots have established. Berries are edible when they begin to turn color, however, antioxidant levels increase and the flavor becomes more palatable the longer they are left on the bush.

FALL: Harvest and process the berries mid-September and get ready to enjoy the fire red foliage!

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

Aronia is packed with nutrients, including zinc, magnesium, iron, and vitamins C, B, and K. As noted before, they are **considered a superfruit containing the most antioxidants of all berries.** Antioxidants are known to inhibit oxidation and reduce free radicals in the body, inhibiting cancer. Studies have shown it can be an effective aid for helping to manage diabetes, **positively influencing insulin levels, immune system, and inflammation.** Studies have also shown **positive effects on the cardiovascular system, liver, stomach lining, and urinary system.** It is highly recommended that aronia berries are processed into **syrops, jams, teas, juices or pies, before consumption.** **The berries can also be dried or frozen.**

PROPAGATING ARONIA SHRUBS

As a shrub with natural suckers, the plant does well with root divisions. It is recommended to propagate by ground-layering: build up the soil around a sucker's base so roots form, allowing the sucker to eventually be cut off to form its own independent plant. Make sure to water 2x a week in the plant's first summer to ensure success.

