



CORNELIAN CHERRY (CORNUS MAS)

PLANT FACTS

Cornelian Cherry (*Cornus mas*) is a slow to moderate growing shrub or small tree that can reach heights of **14-25 feet** if unpruned. The plant is a member of the **dogwood (*Cornaceae*)** family that has recorded use dating back **7,000 years** in ancient Greece. Native to central and southern Europe into Western Asia, the genus comes from the Latin word *cornu* meaning horn due to the strength and density of the wood. Its common name refers to the bright red **cherry-like fruits that look like the semi-precious gemstone carnelian**. While It's known primarily as an **ornamental plant** in the U.S. for its **early winter-March-blooming clusters of yellow flowers** that come out even before the leaves. The tart, cherry-like fruits are part of healthy diets in many regions of the world. The unripe fruit is quite astringent, as is the bark. On mature trees, the cornelian cherry develops an exfoliating bark. **These shrubs can live and be fruitful for more than 100 years**. The early flowers are a good forage plant for honeybees and native bees. It attracts birds and is rather **deer-tolerant**.

GROWING INFO

Cornelian Cherry is an easy-care, cold-hardy plant that grows well in USDA Zones **4 to 8**. It requires **full sun to part shade**. Prefers moist, organically rich soils with a pH **5.5-7.5**, but **can tolerate clay-based soils**. Cornelian cherries are partially self-fertile, but produce more if **cross-pollinated** with another variety. Space plants 10 feet apart if grown as a hedge. Mulching encourages better root growth and drought tolerance. Cultivated varieties yield larger, tastier fruit and are available in both red and yellow fruit coloration.

FALL/WINTER: Needs very little care, but check for small animal damage. Minimal pruning needed, usually completed while dormant in late winter before flowers emerge.

SPRING/SUMMER: Applications of compost tea can be applied to the base in spring. Harvest fruit in late summer.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

The fruit is sweet-tart when fully ripe and is **harvestable on shrubs 4 years or older**. The fruit is not fully ripe until it falls from the bush. While it doesn't store well fresh, it can be dried. In some usages, the unripe fruit is brined like an olive. Its fruit is **antioxidative, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory**. The extracts of the berry have significant **antiatherogenic, anti-inflammatory, and neuroprotective effects**. The cherry is a **great source of potassium** with 530 mg in a 250 ml of juice, along with minerals copper, zinc, and manganese. The best way to get the benefits from the cherry is to **consume it raw**. The cherry is a popular ingredient in **Eastern European traditional cuisines** where its consumed as a wine, dried fruit, and sauce! It is also used in **Traditional Chinese Medicine for treating abnormal discharges from the body, displacement of organs**, among other uses. Consider using in jams, sherbert, syrups, preserves, or even as an add in to an apple crisp!

PROPAGATION

Cornelian Cherry can be propagated by seed and softwood cuttings. Seeds need between **90-120 days of warm, moist stratification, followed by 90-120 days of cold stratification**. Cultivated varieties are propagated via cuttings placed in soil medium and kept moist. **Greenwood cuttings taken in July or August** are more effective than dormant hardwood cuttings.



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