

Native fruits

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Why native fruits?

- Adapted to Colorado weather
- Usually require fewer soil amendments
- May not require water
- Provide food for wildlife if you don't harvest
- Provide landscape interest

“Straight species” vs Cultivars

- Cultivars come from plants found in the wild or created through breeding programs that have superior or substantially different traits than the straight species (fruit set, flavor, yield, leaf color, etc).
 - These selections are propagated and produced in a manner to preserve the desirable characteristics, usually named in quotes i.e. *Ribes aureum* “Gwen’s buffaloberry”
- Can be argued to be “near-native”

Protecting fruit from critters

- Native fruits provide food for wildlife in exchange for distribution
 - They recognize it easily – competition
- Netting on shrubs, strawberries
- Mesh cages



Serviceberry *Amelanchier alnifolia*



How to grow

- Hardy up to 10,000'
- Tolerant of a wide range of light and soil conditions
 - Produces best with full sun and moist, acidic-to-neutral soil.
 - Mulch reduces irrigation needs
- Grows 6-15' tall, bears at 2-4 years

Fruit

- Fruit is produced on the previous year's growth and on older wood.
- Usually young, vigorous branches yield the highest quality fruit.
- Will set more fruit if two cultivars are grown together for cross-pollination



Cultivars (best ones out of Canada)

- Northline
 - 5-7' tall, suckers profusely (fruiting hedge).
 - Highest yields, early bearer, fruit flavorful
 - Selected in 1960 at Beaverlodge Alberta.
- Smoky
 - Exceptionally sweet, 8-10' tall
 - Good yields
 - Released in 1952 by the Beaverlodge Research Center

Golden currant

Ribes aureum



How to grow

- Taxonomic confusion with *Ribes odoratum*
 - Very similar
- Grows 3-5'
- Will grow in poor, dry soils
 - Will produce best in amended soils, some water
- Full sun to part shade

Cultivars

Gwen's Buffalo Currant

- *Ribes aureum* 'Gwen's Buffalo'
 - Ht 3-5 ft,
 - A selection with an improved fruiting habit. Very fragrant yellow blooms. Fall color is a fine orange to red. Tolerates dry conditions.
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Cultivar of *R. odoratum*

- **Crandall Clove Currant**
 - *Ribes odoratum* 'Crandall'
 - Ht 4-6 ft
 - Yellow flowers have a strong clove fragrance. Black ½"-¾" fruits have a sweet spicy flavor. Foliage turns orange in fall.
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Creeping mahonia

Mahonia repens



How to grow

- Can grow in shade of conifers
- Needs no soil amendment
- Adapted to dry soils
- Difficult to get established
 - Try larger plants
 - Protect from wind the first winter
- Fruit bland

American plum

Prunus americana



How to grow

- Hardy to 8,000'
- Grows on poor soils, tolerates drought, produces best with amendment and water
- Needs full sun
- Suckers, forms thickets
 - Short lateral branches thorn-like
- Susceptible to black knot disease
- Fruits very tart, need sweetener; good in preserves, tarts

Chokecherry *Prunus (Padus) virginiana*



Photos: Irene Shonle



Photo: Gary Fewless (C) 2002, Gary Fewless
University of Wisconsin Green Bay

How to grow

- Hardy to about 9,000'
- Grows 6-15'
- Produces best with extra moisture, often found in riparian areas
 - (moisture impt during spring vegetative growth and fall fruit bud set)
- Will grow in poor soils, produces better with some amendment (but still well-drained)
- Produces best in full sun, tolerates some shade

Problems

- Can be affected by tent caterpillars, black knot disease, powdery mildew
- Strong suckering habit – forms hedges



- Begins producing after 3-5 years
- Fruit tart, astringent when underripe
- Makes good jam, pie, syrup and wine
- The wood, leaves and pits are poisonous



Cultivars

- Schubert's red
 - Leaves emerge green
 - Turn purple-red



Wood's rose *Rosa woodsii*



How to grow

- Will grow in poor dry soils
- Rampant growth with moisture, organic matter
- Hips produced after flowers
- Not palatable fresh, good for teas, jams

Silver buffalo berry *Shepherdia argentea*



How to grow

- Hardy to zone 2
- Grows 6-15' tall
- Males and females on separate plants (Dioecious) – need both for fruit
- Fixes nitrogen
- Will grow and produce better with some moisture; typically found in riparian zones
 - Plant is drought tolerant

- Fruit tart, birds will often eat it before we consider it palatable (best taste after a few frosts)
- Raw fruit contains saponin – can be bitter



Wild strawberry

Fragaria vesca



How to grow

- Makes a great groundcover
- Straight species hardy to zone 1
- Prefers extra organic matter in soil
- Half day sun – full day sun
 - If no fruits set, try more sun
- Water when soils are dry for best production
- Mulch with straw

Cultivars - "Alpine strawberries"

- Taxonomic confusion
- There are some cultivars selected for improved taste or yield, but these tend to only be hardy to zone 5.



Wild raspberry

Rubus ideaus ssp melanolasius



How to grow

- Grows wild, often found near sources of moisture
- Produces best with:
 - Slightly acidic, well-amended soils
 - Even moisture while flowering and fruiting
 - Don't allow to dry out
 - Fertilized with balanced fertilizer in early spring
 - Full sun (can tolerate part shade)
- Fruit is very tasty fresh, in jams
- Leaves make a good tea

Transplanting

- Hard to find “straight species” in a nursery.
- Can often find on your land & transplant to better area
 - Cultivate area right by raspberry, fertilize
 - Transplant new suckers the next year when still dormant but ground has thawed

Cultivars

- Many – see fact sheet 7.001, **Raspberries for the home garden:**
www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07001.html
- Trials indicate fall-bearing best for Front Range (and summer-bearing for the mountains)



Beware: considered poisonous

- Mountain elderberry,
Sambucus microbotrys



Recipes

- Fruits of your labor cookbook (CSFS)
 - http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/fruits_of_your_labor_cookbook.pdf
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Other resources

- Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Rockies. L. Kershaw. 2000. Lone Pine Publishing
 - Best Tasting Wild Plants of Colorado and the Rockies. C.B. Seebeck. 1998. Westcliffe publishers.
 - Rocky Mountain Berry Book. B. Krumm. 1991. Falcon Press.
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