

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" – may lose ecosystem function

Protecting fruit from critters

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

Serviceberry *Amelanchier alnifolia*

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 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*

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 Buffaloberry'

Ht 3-5 ft, improved fruiting habit. Very fragrant yellow blooms. Fall color is a fine orange to red. Tolerates dry conditions.

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.

Creeping mahonia *Mahonia repens*

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*

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*

Hardy to about 9,000' Grows 6-15'

Produces best with extra moisture

(esp 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

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*

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*

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*

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.
Some sources claim 'Mignonette' may be hardy to zone 3 or 4 -- sweeter, more productive, no runners
Mulch and cross your fingers?

Wild raspberry *Rubus ideaus ssp melanolasius*

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

Books

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.