

# *Aronia arbutifolia* - Red Chokeberry (*Rosaceae*)

## *Aronia melanocarpa* - Black Chokeberry (*Rosaceae*)

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*Aronia arbutifolia* and *Aronia melanocarpa* are deciduous shrubs known for shiny green summer and red autumn foliage. Chokeberries have colorful, pendulous fruits, are very adaptable to moist/wet sites, and are appropriate for naturalizing and for attracting wildlife.

### USAGE

#### Function

- mass plantings, borders, informal hedges, or low screens
- good near bodies of water

#### Texture

- fine texture in foliage and when bare
- thick density in foliage and when bare (when young), but open density in foliage and when bare (when mature, due to arching habit)

#### Asset

- wet site tolerant
- red or black, persistent fruits, depending on species

#### Liabilities

- suckering can be either desired or detrimental

#### Habitat

- Zones 3 to 9
- Native to Eastern North America, Nova Scotia to Florida, west to Michigan.

### FEATURES

#### Form



- small shrubs; to 5' tall x 4' wide (*A. m.*) or to 8' tall x 4' wide (*A. a.*)
- multi-stemmed and spreading due to suckering

-upright columnar when young, becoming arching vase-shaped with age

-medium growth rate

#### Culture

- full sun to partial shade
- tolerant of poor soils and moisture (wet or dry) but prefers rich, moist, well-drained, slightly acid soil
- takes well to pruning
- generally stress tolerant
- abundantly available in B&B or container

#### Foliage

- dark green; deciduous
- alternate arrangement; obovate; finely serrated; shiny and glabrous above
- autumn color - green to orange to wine-red, with all three colors on the same shrub at the same time; Oct.; autumn color can be spectacular

#### Flowers

- white; May; 1" diameter
- inflorescences; attractive but not overwhelming

#### Fruits

- small black or red fruits in pendulous clusters; black fruits not effective unless viewed up-close or against a white background, but red fruits are dazzling
- Oct. and winter persistent

-common name comes from bitter taste of the fruits

#### Twigs

- brown-red; with striking bright red conical buds partially curling around the stem; lateral buds the same size as terminal buds; stems numerous and upright



#### Trunk

- not applicable

### SELECTIONS

#### Alternates

- good-foliaged small shrubs with erect to arching multi-stemmed habit
- small shrubs with attractive and sometimes persistent fruits (*Amelanchier*, *Viburnum trilobum*)

#### Cultivars – Variants- Related species

-*A. arbutifolia* - Red Chokeberry - is grown for its excellent red autumn color and profuse production of red fruits. This slow growing, suckering shrub transplants well. The 0.25" fruits are borne along the stem and although highly ornamental are not eaten by birds. The white flowers precede the fruit but are not as ornamental. The leaves turn bright red in the autumn. Red Chokeberry will adapt to wet or dry soils.

#### Cultivars:

- 'Brilliantissima' - flowers and fruits are more abundant; striking persistent red fruits and flaming red autumn color, both of which show up better in the landscape than Black Chokeberry; to 6-8' tall.
- 'Erecta' - an upright cultivar reaching 7' x 4'.

-*A. melanocarpa* - Black Chokeberry - a suckering, thicket-forming shrub that adapts to wet or dry sites. The glossy foliage turns red in the autumn and is displayed with the purplish-black fruit. The plant can be used in naturalistic plantings in sun or shade.

#### Cultivars and Varieties:

- 'Autumn Magic' - bright red autumn foliage color.
- A. m. var. elata* (sometimes listed as 'Elata') - Glossy Black Chokeberry - A compact rounded shrub with white flowers. The black fruits persist well into winter. The variety is better than the straight species in its quality of foliage, flowers, and fruits
- Iroquois Beauty™ ('Morton') - A dwarf about 3' tall.
- 'Viking' - A 4-6' shrub with glossy deep green foliage that turns red in the autumn. The plant also produces large black fruits.

