BLACK CHERRY *Prunus serotina* Ehrh.

Black cherry is widely distributed throughout the state. In some parts of the country it is an extremely valuable timber tree, but in Maine does not often grow to sufficient size. It grows on a variety of soils, but makes rapid and best growth on rich, moist land. It has a narrow head, small horizontal branches, and attains a height of 40–50 feet and a diameter of 10–20 inches.

The **bark** on the trunk of young trees is red-brown to black and rather

Black cherry is one of our most valuable timber trees, although not abundant in sufficient size.

shiny with prominent white lenticels. On older trees, the bark is broken into small irregular plates.

The **leaves** are alternate, elliptic, oblong, widest at the center, finely toothed, dark green, shiny, thick, somewhat leathery and 2–5 inches long. The underside of the midrib near the stalk end is covered with rusty brown hairs.

The **flowers** are produced in many flowered racemes 4–5 inches long that appear at the end of May or in early June when the leaves are half-grown. The **fruit** is in drooping racemes, dark purple or almost black when ripe, ¼–½ inch in diameter, and globular in shape. It ripens from June to October and is an important wildlife food.

The **twigs** give off a pungent odor when broken, and the bark has a bitter taste. As with pin cherry, twigs and branches are commonly distorted by a black, warty, fungus growth called "black knot."

The **wood** is rather hard, close-grained, light, strong and easily polished. It is used for furniture and cabinetmaking, interior finishing, wooden-ware, veneer and plywood. It is valued as firewood due to its high heat value and fragrance.

The rusty hairs along the midvein on the back of the leaf distinguish black cherry.

Black cherry twigs have a bitter taste and give off a pungent odor when broken.

MAINE REGISTER OF BIG TREES 2008
Black Cherry
Circumference: 148"
Height: 52'
Crown Spread: 60'
Location: Falmouth

AREA OF OCCURRENCE