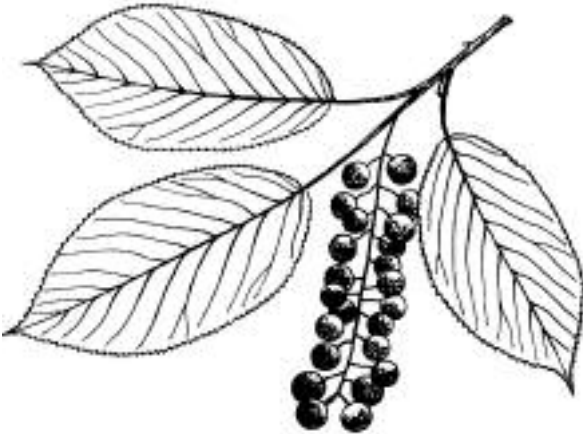




COMMON CHOKECHERRY

Prunus virginiana L.



Common chokecherry wood is heavy and hard, but not strong, and is not used commercially.

Common chokecherry is a shrub or small tree that occurs throughout the state, especially along fencerows in farming communities. It occasionally is 25 feet high and 6 inches in diameter.

The smooth, grayish-brown to black **bark** is usually marked by long, light-colored fissures and has a disagreeable scent.

The **leaves** are alternate, dull, widest at the terminal one-third, 2–4 inches long, finely-toothed, medium-leathery in texture and at maturity are without hairs.

The **flowers** appear from the first of May to June on slender stalks in racemes.





Chokecherry twigs have cone-shaped buds and give off a strong odor when broken.

The **fruit** ripens from July to September, and is about 1/4–1/3 inch in diameter, at first bright red, turning at maturity to dark red or nearly black. It is slightly astringent, but edible.

The **winter buds** are strictly cone-shaped, slender and pointed with a definite purple and tan pattern on the scales. Side buds are not flattened as in black cherry.

The **twigs** have a strong, pungent, skunk-like odor when broken and, as with pin cherry and black cherry, are

frequently distorted by a black, warty, fungus growth called “black knot.”

The **wood** is heavy, hard but not strong, and is not used commercially.

