

# *Prunus avium*

## Bird Cherry, sweet cherry, gean



*Prunus avium* (wild cherry) is found growing in small pockets on the forest edges of Europe and Western Asia with, amongst others, *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Tilia cordata*. Wild cherry becomes a large tree fifteen to twenty-five metres tall and forms a strong, upright trunk because of apical dominance. Imposing multi-stem specimens also occur however. In juvenile trees, the crown shape is semi-open pyramidal; in older specimens, the crown becomes broadly egg-shaped to round and over fifteen metres wide.

In April, *Prunus avium* produces simple, white flowers arranged in clusters on fruiting spurs. Bees, butterflies and other insects love them. The dark red, edible cherries appear after the blossom: birds soon polish them off. The light green, ovate leaves appear just as the flower buds have emerged, turn dark green in the summer and finish off a lovely yellow-red to violet-red in the autumn. The smooth, brown-red bark has lenticels and peels off horizontally. The bark gets darker as the tree ages. The twigs are also red-brown to grey.

Wild cherry is a true landscape tree that needs a lot of space and gets to between 100 and 150 years old. Also, in open green verges on avenues and in parks this species forms a fantastic harbinger of spring. *Prunus avium* likes growing on nutrient-rich, moisture-retentive soils where it can develop deep roots but is very adaptable. It does not tolerate paving, road salt or compact ground and is moderately wind-resistant. *Prunus avium* is often used as a rootstock for other (ornamental) cherries. Its timber is also very valuable and in demand in the furniture industry.

### SEASONAL COLOURS



### TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** standard trees, half-stem trees, feathered trees, multi-stemmed trees, shade trees, characteristic trees, fruit trees, woodland planting stock, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

### USE

**Location:** park, central reservation, large garden, traffic areas, industrial zones, countryside, ecological zone | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** food forest, Eco planting, Landscape planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** rounded, wide egg-shaped | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 15 - 25 m | **Width:** 10 - 15 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 4A - 9B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, butterflies, birds, small mammals, nectar value 5, pollen value 5 | **Extreme environments:** tolerates air pollution

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** raceme, striking, singular | **Flower colour:** white | **Flowering period:** April - April | **Leaf colour:** matt green | **Leaves:** deciduous, ovate, serrate | **Autumn colour:** yellow-orange | **Fruits:** striking, edible, cherry | **Fruit colour:** dark red, black | **Bark colour:** red-brown | **Bark:** smooth, striped | **Twig colour:** red-brown | **Twigs:** bare, with lenticels, horizontal branches | **Root system:** deep, extensive, highly branched, coarse roots, tap root