

Prunus / Flowering Cherry Trees - Growing Guide

Introduction

Japanese flowering cherries can readily be split into two groups. Firstly, those which are grown for their spectacular floral display in April and May, which are ornamental trees which do not set fruit at all and, secondly, those cherries which are primarily fruiting cherries which may or may not have equally good flowers. This article deals only with the former.

To make things easier we have split this group into three sections.

Long Established And Widely Grown Japanese Flowering Cherries

Many of the well-known varieties are grown as street trees in our parks and cities where they flower away prolifically for an all too brief period, especially if the wind gets up, when they are at their peak. They grow to around 25-30ft and are very tolerant of industrial and road traffic pollution. Nearly all these trees are grafted and, at least in high rainfall Cornwall, they live for 60 to 80 years before the effort of flowering so profusely seems to wear them out.

Flowering cherries need to be grown in full sun where they can be appreciated from afar especially when displaying their superb red and yellow autumn colours. They have very different growth habits as trees and those with spreading and more weeping branches are best grown on a bank above a path so that you can look up and enjoy the flowers more from directly below.

A bacterial canker can often infect branches of more mature cherries which causes the growth in these areas to form 'witches brooms' of dense growth which do not produce flowers. Where possible these should be cut out when the tree is dormant.

You can admire the flowers of these cherries below here so this is just a very brief summary.

'Amenogawa', flagpole cherry, columnar habit.

'Kanzan' – perhaps the tallest and quickest growing variety achieving up to 50ft.



Prunus 'Kanzan'



Prunus 'Kanzan'



Prunus 'Kanzan'



Prunus 'Kiku-shidare-zakura'



Prunus 'Kiku-shidare-zakura'



Prunus 'Pink Perfection'



Prunus 'Pink Perfection'



Prunus 'Pink Perfection'



Prunus 'Royal Burgundy'



Prunus 'Royal Burgundy'



Prunus 'Royal Burgundy'



Prunus sargentii



Prunus sargentii



Prunus sargentii



Prunus 'Shogetsu'



Prunus 'Shogetsu'



Prunus 'Shogetsu'



Prunus 'Shogetsu'



Prunus 'Shirofugen'



Prunus 'Shirofugen'



Prunus 'Shirofugen'



Prunus 'Shirofugen'



Prunus 'Shirotae'



Prunus 'Shirotae'



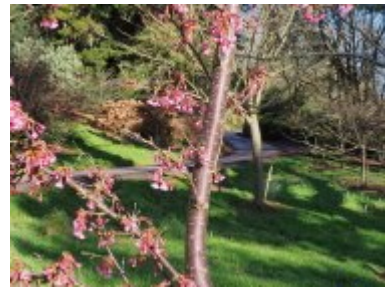
Prunus 'Shirotae'



Prunus 'Shirotae'



Prunus 'Shosar'



Prunus 'Shosar'



Prunus 'Shosar'

‘Ukon’ – has a vigorous spreading habit.



Prunus 'Ukon'



Prunus 'Ukon'



Prunus 'Ukon'

In the last few years there has been great excitement amongst gardeners to discover the introduction of a whole new (to the UK) range of Japanese cherries. These were originally bred and developed (even through World War II) by nurserymen in Matsumae town in northern Japan. Climatically they are therefore more suited to UK growing than some of the traditional varieties. In our opinion they easily better the traditional varieties in terms of floriferousness, size of flowers, and the overall vigour of the young trees. What is more they flower well even as very young trees. After five to seven years of growth you will have a spectacle that will take your breath away as much as they have ours here. What is more the flowers hold longer on the tree too.

The downside is that they all have unpronounceable names. However some have developed names which are perhaps easier to handle!

‘Pink Champagne’ = ‘Ichiyo’

‘Candy Floss’ = ‘Matsumae-beni-murasaki’

‘Pink Parasol’ = ‘Matsumae-henagasa’

‘Fragrant Cloud’ = ‘Matsumae-shizuka’

You can see the flowers here of all the varieties which we offer on our website. The rising popularity of these Matsumae cherries means that there will be shortages in availability.

Flowering Cherries With Other Attributes

a. Some cherries are grown primarily for their peeling bark

P. rufa has extraordinary peeling reddish-brown bark which becomes quite gnarled in maturity. The flowers are pale pink. At the Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park they grow this cherry in a huge clump on top of a hill for effect.



Prunus rufa



Prunus rufa



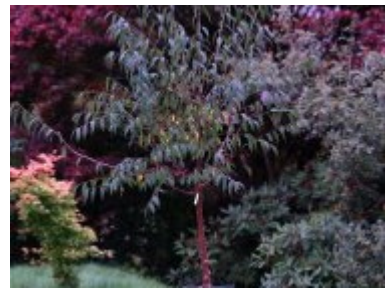
Prunus rufa



Prunus serrula



Prunus serrula



Prunus serrula



Prunus serrulata
'Alboplena'



We have added two to the catalogue which we think have exceptional merit. The photographs hopefully show this well.

P. x incam 'Okame' has vast quantities of carmine-pink flowers in February well before the leaves appear.



Prunus 'Okame'



Prunus 'Okame'



Prunus 'Okame'



Prunus 'Okame'



Prunus 'Kursar'



Prunus 'Kursar'



Prunus 'Kursar'



Prunus 'Kursar'

P. x subhirtella 'Autumnalis' flowers from November through to February with succeeding flushed of single white flowers.



Prunus x subhirtella
'Autumnalis'



Prunus x subhirtella
'Autumnalis'



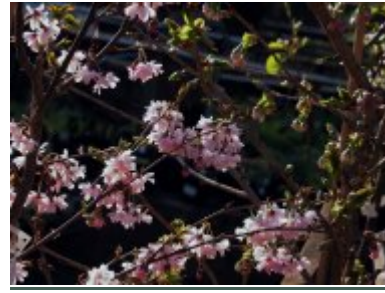
Prunus x subhirtella
'Autumnalis'



Prunus x subhirtella
'Autumnalis Rosea'



Prunus x subhirtella
'Autumnalis Rosea'



Prunus x subhirtella
'Autumnalis Rosea'

Pruning Drooping Branches - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/lvXAS99CN7U>

Pruning Overlapping Branches - Video Tip

A spring job to check for overlapping branches on your flowering and fruiting cherries.

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/SdXndP9G0Tk>

Prunus 'Okame', 'Kursar' & Conradinae - Video Tip

Quick video on 3 spring flowering Prunus. -

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/Q9p-RAEeRyE>

'Kursar' & conradinae spring 2021