

Harvard Conservation Trust 2014

Tree-For-All Selection

Black Chokeberry ~ *Aronia melanocarpa*

Aronia melanocarpa, commonly known as Black chokeberry, is a member of the Rose family. It is a multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub that can grow 3 – 6 feet in height and form dense colonies over time in areas where it thrives. Native to eastern North America, its habitat ranges from Nova Scotia south to Florida and west to Michigan.



<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Sten>

Black chokeberry is noted for its smooth, elliptic-to-oblong shaped leaves, 1 to 3 inches in length and finely serrate. The leaves are dark green above and lighter green below. Black chokeberry flowers bloom in the spring (mid-May) and have five white petals and numerous pink stamens. Its primary pollinators are small bees. The foliage can produce good red-wine color in fall, with fruits forming in clusters of blackish purple berries. Young twigs are slender, smooth and rather straight, yellowish brown to purplish brown in color; older twigs become gray or ash-like.

Black chokeberry is a very adaptable species. While it is moderately tolerant of shade and prefers moist acidic soils, it can grow in a wide range of soil moisture. Common natural habitats include bogs and swamps, low wooded areas and clearings. Dry natural habitats are rocky slopes, bluffs and cliffs. It is often found along clearings, roadsides and utility rights of way. For landscaping purposes, black chokeberry is suitable for planting in a woodland garden, a sunny edge location, in dappled shade, or a shady edge. It can be grouped in shrub borders or in open woodland areas.

Bare Root Planting Recommendations:

1. Plant as soon as possible. **Do not let it dry out.**
2. If waiting for the 'right' place, heel it in temporarily in a shady wind-free location.
3. Clear selected planting site of all grasses, other vegetation and roots.
4. Dig planting hole large enough so plant roots can spread out evenly.
5. Loosen soil at edges and mix in humus or aged compost.
6. Create a cone of soil in the center of the hole. Place the plant of top of the cone with the roots splayed out around the base. Seat the plant on the cone so the base and the crown of the roots are at least two inches above the level of the soil. The plant will settle naturally, and the roots and base will sink into the soil of their own accord. Add backfill and 'Roots' or other root growth enhancer if needed. Once again be careful not to pack the soil too tightly. Pat the soil into place with both hands instead of stomping on it.
7. Place tall stake close to plant to enable you to find it again and prevent accidental mowing or weed whacking.
8. Water your plant thoroughly and deeply on planting, but don't flood it! Repeat every week for several months, or more frequently (2 x per week) during droughts to give your tree a good start. Water trees for 2 years after planting.
9. Do not fertilize until the second year when feeding roots are established.