

DWARF SAND CHERRY

Prunus pumila L. var.
depressa (Pursh) Gleason
Plant Symbol = PRPUD

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials
Program



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Alternate Names
eastern sandcherry

Uses
Dwarf sand cherry is useful primarily as a streambank and lakeshore stabilization plant where the soil conditions are sandy and well drained. It is prostrate, and will be shaded out over time by taller plants, but produces an extensive root system and roots down where the stems touch the ground. The plant top growth tends to trap sand during flood events. Sand cherry produces fruit which is of value to wildlife.

This plant may also have landscaping potential due to its dense, neat prostrate growth and attractive spring flowers.

Status
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Dwarf sand cherry produces creeping stems that radiate outward from the original plant. The prostrate branches seldom produce growth over 12-15 inches high, but the branches may be 10-15 feet long. The gray or black colored stems root prolifically where they contact the ground. The root system is fibrous and extensive. The simple leaves are long and narrow, roughly 2 1/2 by 1/2 inches, and medium green in color. The leaves are shiny on the top surface. Small white to pinkish flowers are produced in May.

Adaptation and Distribution

Dwarf sand cherry is native to the region from the Delaware River to the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec. As the cultivar was from the southern end of the range, it is expected that it will be adapted to the cooler microclimates in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It is found on sandy soils along streams and other water bodies, but will grow successfully on other soils that have good drainage. The plant is drought tolerant once established, yet will tolerate periodic flooding of short duration.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment

Planting 1-0 nursery bare-root stock is preferred. Older plants are usually too large for easy planting. Take care to properly place the root system in the planting hole or trench. Plant dormant stock early in the spring as possible. Containerized plants can be planted in early summer as well. There are 2,900 seeds per pound.

Dwarf sand cherry should be planted in mixtures with other species for critical area treatment. Spacings of 4x4 to 5x5 work well. This plant should not be used where reed canary grass, common reedgrass, or Japanese fleecflower is present due to the rapid shading that these plants generate.

Management

Once established, dwarf sand cherry requires no management. Other local native species will seed into the environment created by the sand cherry and occupy the site. Sites with a combination of factors

which favor the sand cherry will retain the stand, but most will not over the long term.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

‘Catskill’ dwarf sand cherry is the only cultivar that has been released in the US. It was selected from a native stand found along the Delaware River on the NY-PA border.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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