

Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis' 'Autumnalis' Higan Cherry¹

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INTRODUCTION

Double-flowered ('Autumnalis') Higan Cherry is 25 to 35-foot-tall and wide tree, usually with a multiple trunk, slender, upright branches, and a rounded canopy (Fig. 1). The canopy on older trees often grows wider than the tree grows tall. Before the leaves appear in spring, the trees are covered with many semi-double pink flowers; some flowers may also appear in autumn if the weather is sufficiently warm. The one to four-inch-long dark green leaves are later joined by the appearance of small, black berries. The leaves cast light shade below the spreading canopy, and turn attractive fall colors of yellow and bronze before dropping.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Prunus subhirtella* 'Autumnalis'

Pronunciation: PROO-nus sub-her-TELL-uh

Common name(s): 'Autumnalis' Higan Cherry

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

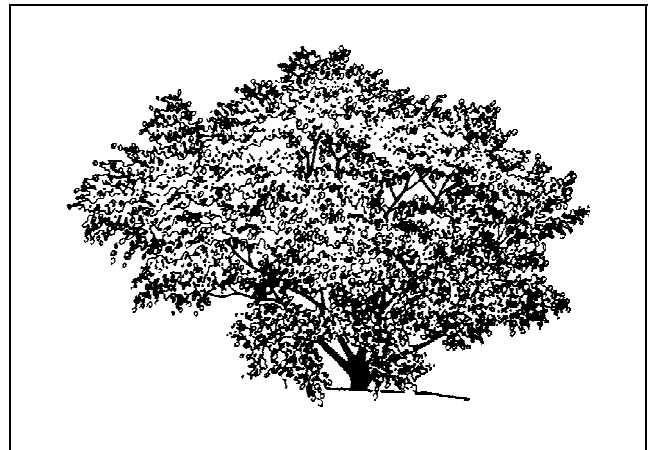


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Autumnalis' Higan Cherry.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 35 feet

Spread: 25 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: vase shape

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: oblong; ovate

Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

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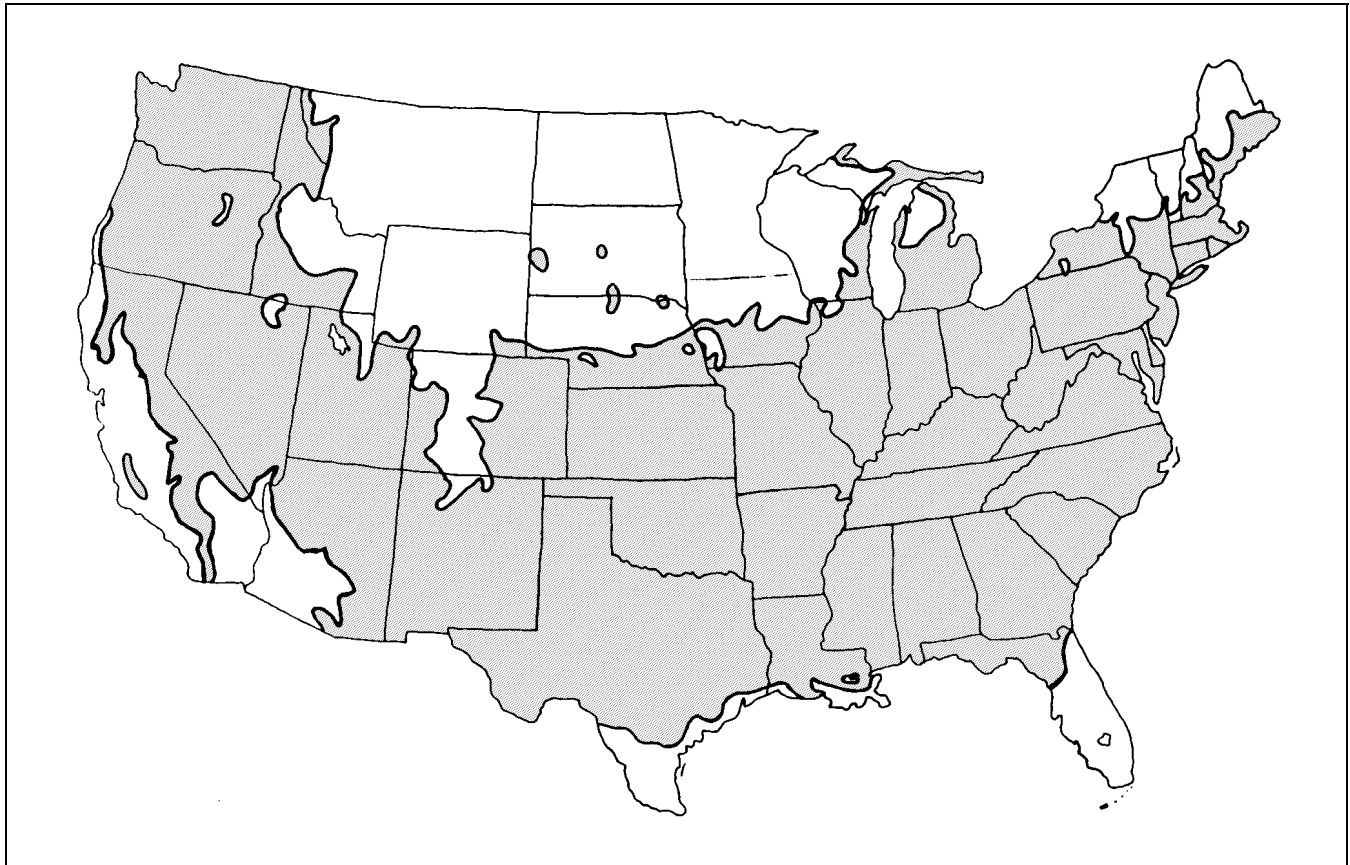


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: fall flowering; showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

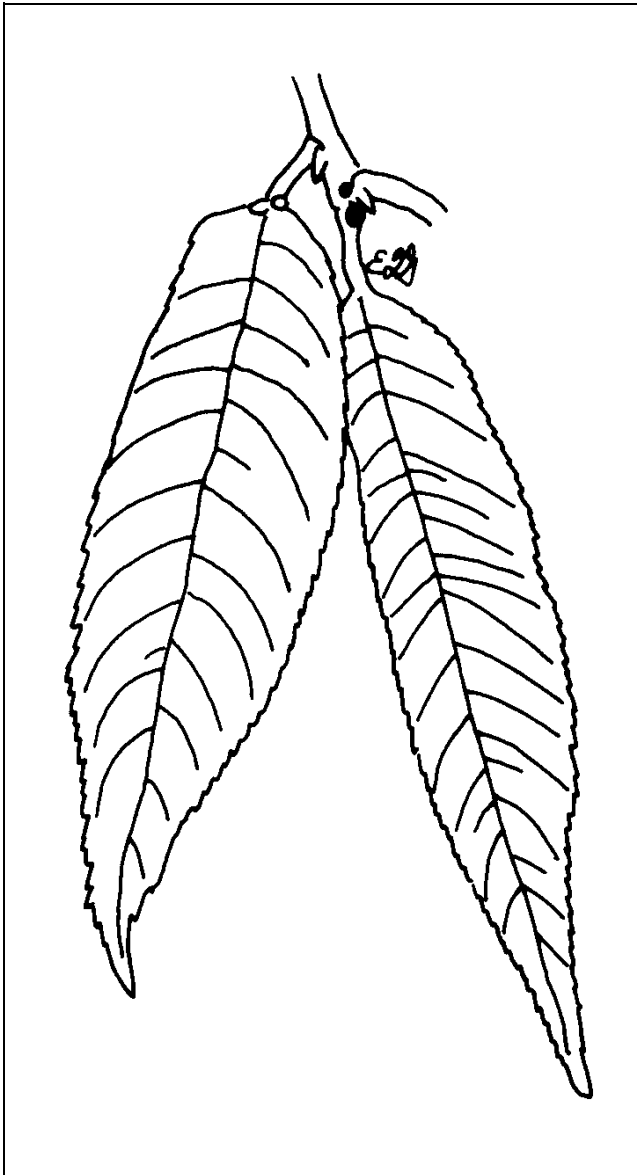


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Autumnalis' Higan Cherry.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Use the tree along an entrance road to a commercial development planted on 20-foot centers or along side the patio or deck in the back yard. It also makes a nice small-scale court yard tree or specimen planted in the lawn or in bed of ground cover. It could be planted along a residential street where there is plenty of soil for root expansion. It is becoming available in the industry.

Double-flowered Higan Cherry should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, acid soil with sufficient moisture. It is moderately drought-tolerant and grows well in clay soil, as long as it drains well. Trees grow quickly when young but slow down with age.

Propagation is by cuttings or grafts.

Pests

Aphids cause distortion of new growth, deposits of honeydew, and sooty mold.

Borers attack trees under stress. Keep trees healthy with regular fertilizer applications.

Scales of several types infest prunus. Horticultural oil is used to provide some control of overwintering stages.

Spider mites cause yellowing or stippling but are very difficult to see. They are usually recognized only after plant symptoms are quite advanced.

Tent caterpillars make large webbed nests in trees then eat the foliage. One defoliation may not be serious and small nests can be pruned out and destroyed. Use *Bacillus thuringiensis* when the insects are first seen and are still small.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern. A bacterium causes leaf spot and twig cankers on cherry. Small, reddish spots dry, and drop out, giving a shot-holed appearance. Defoliation can be severe when conditions favor disease development. Fertilize infected trees and prune out infected branches.

A fungus causes reddish spots which drop out leaving shot holes. Once the holes appear the leaves may drop. The disease is worse in wet weather.

Black knot causes black swellings or galls on the branches. Branches with galls are pruned out.