

Description

Colorow¹ Germplasm *Prunus virginiana* L. var. *melanocarpa* (A. Nelson) Sarg. was originally collected in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. It is a selected class release of black chokecherry which is a native, perennial shrub and/or small tree reaching average heights of 12 feet tall and 13.5 feet wide. Mature fruit are fleshy drupes that are dark red to black and possess an acidulous taste. Black chokecherry produces toxic levels of hydrogen cyanide (HCN) or prussic acid in the plant's bark, leaves, stems, and stone/seed pit. However the fleshy outer layer of the fruit is nontoxic. Colorow Germplasm begins flowering in May and the fruit is ripe in mid to late August.



Adaptation

Black chokecherry can be found throughout Canada, south to Georgia and west to California at elevations ranging from 500 – 10,000 feet. In Colorado it

can be found at elevations of 4500 – 9000 feet. This species can be found along streambanks, drainages, gullies, sheltered hill slopes, and canyon bottoms. It is well adapted to soil types that range from Entisols to Mollisols that have soil textures ranging from sandy loams to clays. It can tolerate moderately acidic (pH 3.5), moderately basic (pH 7.6) and weakly saline soils. However, it cannot tolerate soils that are poorly drained or suffer from prolonged flooding periods. It is well suited in sites that receive 12 to 30 inches of precipitation annually.

Uses

Colorow Germplasm is cold tolerant, has excellent survival, vigor, heavy seed production and has low animal use in regards to browsing. However, it is a valuable plant for providing food, shelter, cover, and nesting habitat for wildlife. Its fruit is readily sought out by bear, birds, rabbits, rodents, and small mammals. The young immature plants are desirable to deer, elk, moose, bear, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn during the spring as well as winter months. During the spring months, while in bloom, black chokecherry provides an excellent source of nectar for many pollinators such as ants, butterflies, honeybees, flies, and hummingbirds.

Colorow Germplasm can be used in urban landscaping enhancement plantings, range and mined land

reclamation plantings, shelterbelts, and windbreaks.

Colorow Germplasm has performed well near Pinedale, Wyoming and Craig and Meeker, Colorado for over 30 years.



Planting Methods

Colorow Germplasm can be established with seed planted about ¼ of an inch deep in the fall months or with container grown plants set in the ground in early spring when soil moisture is present. Sprouting from the parent plant does occur. Establishment can be slow, especially if soil moisture is low. New plantings can require several years (7 to 10) for flowering and seed production. Protection from browsing and plant competition along with the use of mulch will reduce the time required for establishment. There are approximately 4,200 seeds per pound of black chokecherry.

Management

After seeding or planting live plants, controlling wildlife browsing will be

important for maintaining vigorous growth and fruit production. Reducing plant competition is also necessary for rapid plant growth. Once established, the plant can withstand moderate to heavy browsing in years with average to above average precipitation. Colorow Germplasm has displayed minor aggressive behavior because of rhizomatous roots. Some routine management may be required to control and maintain this plant species in an agronomic, horticultural or home landscaping application, but control practices are financially feasible and practical. No specific management is anticipated in range or large landscape plantings where the species naturally occurs.



Availability

Colorow Germplasm black chokecherry was released in 2009. UCEPC will maintain G1 seed. G1 seed and G2 plants will be available to growers and nurseries. Growers and nurseries may sell G1 seed or G2 plants. No seed beyond G1 or plants beyond G2 will be eligible for certification as Colorow Germplasm. For obtaining seed please contact UCEPC.

¹Chief **Colorow** Ignacio Ouray Walkara (1808 - 1855) was a Native American leader of a Ute Timpanogo band. The Timpanogo band was also known as the Yampa band, their boundaries encompassed the entire Yampa River.

For More Information

Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center
5538 RBC #4

Meeker, Colorado 81641

Phone: 970-878-5004

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/copmc/>

or

Your local USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service Office

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Center
Meeker, Colorado