

Juneberry (*Amelanchier* species)

Perhaps knowing that a native species is edible will provide that additional incentive you need to add it to your yard....

The Juneberry is a small, often multi-stemmed, deciduous tree that grows to 25 feet in height. It is very easy to grow and provides year-round interest. In winter, its smooth gray bark is streaked with curving, vertical, dark gray fissures; and the twigs are slender, slightly zigzagged, reddish brown to olive green. In spring, delicate five-petaled white flowers (resembling apple blossoms) appear just as the leaves start to burst out. The flowers ripen into magenta berries that gradually turn to dark purple during the summer. Finally in autumn, the blue-green oval 4-5 inch leaves turn a beautiful orange-red.



The taste of the sweet, juicy Juneberries has been compared to that of pears or cherries. The soft seeds add a nutty, almond-like flavor. People use Juneberries to make jellies, jams, sauces, and even wine. Native Americans used the berries in combination with fat and dried meat to make pemmican, a high-energy food for winter travel. The vitamin C in the berries helped prevent scurvy. George Washington planted several trees at Mount Vernon. But the fruits didn't ship well, so they never took off as a commercial fruit.

In the wild, the Juneberry fruits are devoured by songbirds, ruffed grouse, and mammals including squirrels, deer, raccoon, opossum and black bear. Many species of caterpillars feed on Juneberry leaves, providing high-energy food for baby birds and insect-eaters.

The Juneberry Tree is known by different names in different parts of the country. The timing of its spring flowers coincides with the shad run, hence the name "Shadbush." One of the first blooms of spring, the flowers were often used as decoration for funeral rites, thus "Serviceberry." Other common names include "Sugarplum" and "Saskatoon."

Photos and more information available at:

<http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com/Plants.Folder/Juneberries.html>

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/269434/incomparable_juneberry_tree

<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/a/amearb/amearb1.html>