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GARDEN NOTES

CHERRIES ARE CHEERY FOR ANY LANDSCAPE

By Dennis Hinkamp

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Few flowering trees rival the beauty of a weeping cherry in full bloom, says Jerry Goodspeed, Utah State University Extension horticulturist. Flowering cherries belong to the genus Prunus. This genus of plants includes more than 400 species, including many of our favorite spring and shrubs.

Most flowering cherries are s blooming trees mall trees averaging about 20 to 25 feet in height at maturity, he says. They are generally regarded as a short-lived tree, living only an average of 30 to 50 years. Apart from their wonderful flowers, they are noted for their attractive red-colored bark and distinctive form of weeping, upright and vase shapes.

There are a couple of weeping cherry trees that thrive in our area, Goodspeed says. One that is always a favorite is the double pink weeping cherry. Its multi-petaled, pink blossoms stay on the tree up to three weeks. Once the blossoms fade, the shape and form can be attractive and add a soft, flowing element to the landscape.

Washington, D.C., is renowned worldwide for its cherry blossoms, which thousands of visitors travel to see each spring, he adds. One of the more popular cherries to adorn that area is the Yoshino flowering cherry. This tree is noted for its white profusion of blossoms that appear in early to late April.

The Akebono variety has delicate blossoms that open to a pastel pink color, he says. The leaves and flowers form waves or flushes throughout the tree, adding character and strength.

One of the most popular flowering trees grown throughout northern America is the Kwanzan cherry, Goodspeed says. One reason for its popularity is its hardiness and ability to survive where other flowering cherries falter. It has large, double, pink blossoms and can be grown in most soil types. The Kwanzan cherry can be grown as a street tree, a specimen or a small shade tree to surround a patio or deck. It can get as tall as 30 feet. For a while it was over-planted in many cities, but it's hard to complain about a tree with such wonderful blossoms.

A couple of related cherries that also have incredible flowers are the royal burgundy and Mt. Fuji, he says. The flowers on royal burgundy are quite large, and, not surprisingly, a burgundy to light purple color. Mt. Fuji has white, fragrant flowers, and the tree has a more open, spreading habit.

The Sargent cherry grows a little taller than some others, reaching a height of 35 feet when it's happy and healthy, he adds. It has a soft, pink flower, and produces striking red to yellow fall color, which is a bonus for a flowering cherry. The Columnaris variety is upright and one of the few columnar trees that flowers.

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