

Mountain Ash

Sorbus aucuparia

Mountain Ash combine striking ornamental value with tasty and healthful fruit. Most are adaptable to many soil types. It features an upright growth habit and abundant clusters of snow white flowers followed by large bright orange fruit by late summer. Birds especially like the fruit. Seeds easily germinate in the landscape. The fall foliage is showy yellow to red, yet leaves drop early. The vertically oriented branch form makes the tree attractive even without its foliage. But this same feature can cause branches to break from the trunk in storms due to poor strength connections. Mountain Ash has an initially rapid growth rate but slows with age. I have found Mountain Ash to be much less drought and soil tolerant than reported.



Identification

Leaves

Deciduous, alternate, odd pinnately compound. Leaflets are serrate, generally less than 2" long, elliptical, green in summer, and showy in autumn.



Bark/Wood

Bark is grayish-brown. Visible lenticels. Wood is weak and unremarkable.



Flower/Fruit

Monoecious; showy clusters of white flowers in the spring. Fruit sets early in the summer, red, clusters of up to 40 less than 1/2 inch fleshy fruits.



Form

Strongly upright small tree. It has a tendency to develop multiple leaders. Prone to crotch breakage due to poor collar formation.



Uses

Ornamental and wildlife tree for use in many landscape types including urban areas. Has been grown in compacted soils.

Ethnobotany

Native Distribution

Russia and Ukraine.

Establishment

Easily establishes from seed.

Growing Conditions and Culture

Mature Size 30'Hx20'Wx1'dbh
 USDA Zone 3-6
 Light Requirements Full Sun

Soils
 Drought Tolerant?
 Inundation Tolerant?

Diverse

Yes

No

Pests/Damaging Agents

Quite susceptible to fire blight, prune out affected branches. Scab is known to defoliate Mountain Ash. Prone to powdery mildew in humid climates. Fungal diseases common.

Similar Species

Propagation

Seed rapidly and easily germinates following cold stratification.

Source(s)

Transplants from Northwoods Nursery, Molalla, OR.