

Wild Plum

Prunus americana

Wild plum, a hardy and early blooming tree, is native to Aitkin County. Leaves are serrated, 2"-4" long, while branches have thorns that are 2"-3" in length. 1" white flowers appear March-May, and 1" plums, with a hard pit at the center, ripen July-October. The plums may be eaten raw, or cooked into jellies, preserves, or baked goods. Rabbits, deer, grouse, and songbirds utilize wild plum for cover. Wild turkeys, raccoons, black bears, and deer are only a few of the species that will eat plums in the fall. Additionally, the dense root system of a wild plum colony will minimize erosion along streambanks and wetland edges.



Height: up to 25'

Under favorable conditions, wild plum will grow several inches in height per year.

Planting environment:

Soil composition: Gravel, sand, loam; not clayey

Soil moisture: Moist to well-drained, not dry

Sunlight: Full to partial sun (greater than 4 hours of sun/day)

Wild plum may be planted 8' to 15' apart; mature and isolated trees may grow to a branch width of 20'. Wild plum is tolerant of crowding.



Maintenance:

Remove weeds near plantings for the first few years to ensure good establishment. Wild plum will sucker--grow new stems from the root system--away from the main trunk. If undesirable, suckers can be controlled by mowing or cutting. Wild plum naturally grows densely and should be left as a thicket if grown for wildlife. Limited pruning of dead, diseased, and broken branches in late winter/early spring may be helpful to maximize fruit production. Remove no more than 1/3 of the canopy each year.

Top diseases/pests:

1. Plum pocket/bladder plum
2. Black knot
3. Bears

