

European Mountain-ash



European Mountain-ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

General Description

A small to medium-sized tree native to northern Europe and Asia. The most widely planted of all the mountain-ash species. This genus is in the Rose family and susceptible to fireblight. Sunscald may also be a problem on young trees. The largest tree in North Dakota is 36 feet tall with a canopy spread of 39 feet.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Terminal bud is woolly, purplish-brown.

Bud Size - 1/4 to 1/2 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Pinnate compound, 9 to 15 leaflets per leaf.

Leaf Margins - Serrate, usually entire on lower third.

Leaf Surface - Glabrescent above, glaucescent and pubescent beneath.

Leaf Length - 4 to 8 inches; leaflets 3/4 to 1 3/4 inches.

Leaf Width - 1 to 3 inches; leaflets 1/3 to 1/2 inch.

Leaf Color - Dull dark green; red fall color.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Borne in 3 to 5 inch diameter flat-topped corymbs.

Flower Color - Creamy-white.

Fruit Type - Small, berry-like pome, clustered.

Fruit Color - Bright orange-red.

Form

Growth Habit - Erect, forming an ovate or spherical canopy at maturity.

Texture - Fine, summer; medium, winter.

Crown Height - 20 to 30 feet.

Crown Width - 15 to 25 feet.

Bark Color - Young stems are pubescent, becoming glabrous with gray-brown to coppery-brown sheen when older.

Root System - Medium in depth and spread.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Prefers well-drained loams

Soil pH - 4.5 to 7.5. Does not tolerate salinity.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 3.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 3.

Water

Requires additional water during droughts. Does not withstand ponding or water-logged soils.

Light

Full sun.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Small tree for farmstead windbreaks in eastern half of state in protected areas.

Wildlife

Fruits may hang on well into the winter and on some plants appear to be more palatable to birds after they have been subjected to freezing and thawing.

Agroforestry Products

Wood - Furniture and tools.

Food - Fruit processed in jams or jellies, particularly in Europe.

Medicinal - Used for sore throats, coughs and diarrhea. Source of parasorbic acid, an antibiotic.

Urban/Recreational

Used as a boulevard, specimen, and shade tree in residential landscapes.

Cultivated Varieties

Black Hawk Mountain-ash (*Sorbus aucuparia* 'Black Hawk')

Cardinal Royal Mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia* 'Cardinal Royal')

Coles Columnar Mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia* 'Coles Columnar')

Cutleaf European Mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia* 'Asplenifolia')

Upright European Mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia* 'Fastigiata')

Wilson Mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia* 'Wilson') - Columnar form.

Yellowfruit Mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia* 'Xanthocarpa')

Related Species

American Mountain-ash (*Sorbus americana*) - Alkaline pH sensitive.

Showy Mountain-ash (*S. decora*) - Alkaline pH sensitive.

Pests

Disease pests include fireblight and canker. Insect pests include aphids and scales. Sunscald may occur on young, thin-barked trees.