



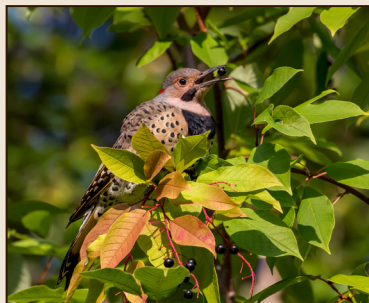
CHOKECHERRY

Nature's Tart Treasure

Environmental Message

August 2025

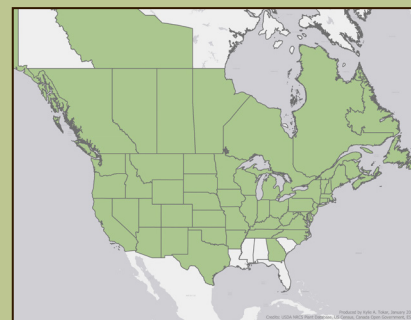
Did you know? Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) is named for its tart, astringent berries, which can make you “choke” when eaten raw, but these same berries transform into delicious jams, jellies, and syrups when sweetened. This resilient native plant is a pioneer species, meaning it is often one of the first plants to regenerate in disturbed areas, stabilizing soil and paving the way for other vegetation to grow.



Human and Wildlife Uses. Indigenous peoples used its bark in traditional medicines and its berries to make pemmican, a high-energy food. Today, the berries are used in artisanal wines and preserves. The berries are a favorite of birds, and its dense growth provides them excellent nesting cover. The flowers are an early-season nectar source for pollinators. The meaty flesh of the fruit is not toxic. However, the leaves, bark, stem, and stone can be potentially poisonous to livestock if consumed in large quantities, especially when wilted.

Border Zone Compatible. Chokecherry typically grows 10–25 feet tall, making it suitable for border zones in electric utility rights-of-way (ROW). Its ability to form dense thickets through root suckers can be both a benefit and a challenge: it helps stabilize soil and suppress invasive species but may require occasional spot treatments to manage spread. Found in open woodlands, grasslands, and riparian zones, chokecherry thrives in diverse habitats. When managed appropriately, it is a valuable addition to ROW, supporting pollinator habitat and wildlife.

Distribution Map



References/Works Cited

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