

JUST FRUIT:

Aronia Berry



ARONIA

ARONIA, MELANOCARPA

RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR - VIKING



Ecology



Member of the Rose Family, Native to Eastern North America & Wisconsin - Zone 3 - 4
Sun/shade - Full sun or partial shade. Plant spacing - 3 - 5' in row spacing.

Deciduous shrub which can grow to a height of 3 to 6 feet tall. The fine-toothed leaves are medium green and hairless, with raised glands along the top of the midrib, glossy green turning to flame red in the fall. Potential use as cut flower. In spring, the pink-white lightly fragrant bisexual flowers form clusters that are 2 to 2½ inches across. Aronia also makes good wildlife plantings or windbreaks. Its berries provide food for songbirds in mid- to late-winter. Numerous suckers are produced from the roots and fill in the space between the plants like a hedgerow.

Primary pollinator

Bees

Fruit

In mid to late summer the fruit begins to form. Blueberry-size fruit hanging from red pedioles in pretty clusters turning from green to black as fruit matures. High nutraceutical content, deep anthocyanin - fruit higher in anti-oxidant than blueberry and cranberry. pH - 3.3 - 3.7

Soil Conditions

Best growth obtained in moist, well-drained soils, but soil type not critical as can be found growing in sand dunes, dry rocky slopes, dry bluffs, and grassy areas.

WHY GROW ARONIA?

Aronia plants are easy to grow and maintain. The plants do not need trellising, spraying or bird netting. Other than harvesting, weed management and deer protection are the only major maintenance tasks. Recommend woodchip or clean straw mulch. Mowing between rows or plants may also be required depending on orchard layout. Aronia is easy to grow organically and is gaining interest amongst Midwest growers for its commercial production potential. The fruit has a long hang time after maturity allowing for a long harvest season. Aronia can be propagated from soft cuttings taken late spring or early summer.



The berries can be harvested by hand or with a mechanical harvester.

In Europe, aronia berries are harvested with a machine that is similar to the blueberry harvesters used in the United States (Trinklein 2007). [Oxbo International Corporation](#) offers the Korvan line of blueberry harvesters that include self-propelled and tow-behind models. Economic Potential - Low input, first harvest 1 - 2 year. Vaughn Pittz an aronia grower with Sawhill Organics in Iowa, relayed a landowner can make between \$8,000 and \$10,000 an acre from a mature aronia crop.

Local Nursery supplies - Knight's Hollow Nursery - Middleton - Micropropagated plants. Jungs Garden Center.





Aronia Berry - Social Benefits, Tastes, Potential Uses

Public interest in eating healthy, local fruits high in antioxidants and organic products are driving the interest in aronia as a commercial, easy-to-grow organic crop, according to Charlie Caldwell, an aronia grower in Iowa. Caldwell believes more research is needed, especially on production practices and marketing. He sees the market increasing, as more people learn about the fruit (Sagarrio 2008) With articles citing such claims as, "Acai is a berry that has been in the headlines, but research reveals that it takes a backseat to a berry called Aronia" (Iowa State University Extension) and "Aronia berries contain very high levels of antioxidants — higher than acai, grapes, elderberries, blueberries, and other fruits" (Kansas State University Extension).

"ORAC, Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity, is the method that is used to measure the antioxidant capabilities of biological samples such as fresh fruits and vegetables. The ORAC value recorded for Aronia is about 58 percent higher in antioxidant levels than blueberries and over 90 percent more than cranberries ... Proanthocyanidins have benefits that are directly related to protection against Cardiovascular disease. The concentration of PAs in the Aronia berry is among the highest reported value of any food."

Research has shown that aronia has more antioxidant power than other fruits including grapes, elderberries, blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, prunes, cherries, bananas, oranges, apples and pears. Studies have shown that antioxidants

help reduce the risk for cancer, heart disease, inflammation, diabetes, bacterial infections and neurological diseases in humans. They also slow the aging process. *Source - Eldon Everhart, Horticulture - Iowa State Extension*



8 month old micropropagated Aronia berry planted in May 2010 at Hilltop Community Farm. Photo by Rob McClure



Aronia berries while edible fresh, are much tastier when processed. They can be used to make tea, juice, stand alone aronia wine or blended with grapes or other fruits. Aronia fruit or fruit juice can be used to make jams, jellies, syrup, candy, salsa and barbeque sauce, and to flavor and color yogurt, sorbet, ice cream, milk and other products. What do aronia berries taste like?

Aronia berries have a distinctive, pleasant flavor. Astringency is the sensation that most people notice first. They will make your mouth pucker. This dry mouth feeling is caused by chemicals known as tannins. Tannins make dry wines dry. Many people like that dry, mouth puckering quality of dry wines and aronia berries. Freezing reduces the astringency of aronia berries. When fully ripe, aronia berries have a sugar content as high as grapes or sweet cherries.

- RECIPE SAMPLER -

Aronia Bread -

- 2 cups Flour
 - 1 1/2 teaspoon Baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon Salt; 1/2 teaspoon Baking soda
 - 1 Egg; 1/8 cup Shortening
 - 3/4 cup orange juice; 1 cup Sugar
 - 1 cup aronia berries, 1 cup Nuts
- Sift together flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda. In blender, combine egg, shortening, orange juice, and sugar. Add aronia berries & nuts and

chop briefly. Empty into flour mixture. Mix by hand until moistened. Bake in a greased 9x5 pan at 350F for 50 to 60 minutes source - antioxidantfruits.com, "A wire broom upside down. Chokeberry tree bunches sweep white falling crumbs." Maija Rhee Devine, Chokeberry Tree in Winter, December 2001