

# JUST FRUITS: SASKATOON



**SASKATOON**

AMELANCHIER ALNIFOLIA

RECOMMENDED CULTIVARS -  
HONEYWOOD, NORTHLINE,  
SMOKEY, SUCCESS, PEMBINA



## Ecology

Member of the Rose Family,  
Native to Eastern North  
America & Wisconsin - Zone  
2



Sun/shade - Full sun or partial shade. Plant  
spacing - 8 - 12' in row spacing. For hedge  
effect plant 4 - 5'

Deciduous trees and largish shrubs which  
can grow to a height ranging from 8 -  
10' (most A. alnifolia) to 20 - 25' feet tall.

Boasts copious racemes of stunning,  
starlike white flowers in spring; finely  
toothed, oval-shaped, bluish/green leaves,  
turn crimson in fall. Numerous suckers are  
produced from the roots and fill in the space  
between the plants like a hedgerow.

## Primary pollinator

Self-fruitful; supplementary pollination  
(primarily songbirds) increases fruit set  
marginally; the number of seeds/fruit varies  
from 1 to 10 with an average of 3

## Fruit

Saskatoon is referential to the month which  
trees fruit. Similar to blueberry in looks and  
taste, the fruit hangs in clusters from  
spreading, open vase-shaped bushes.  
Green berries first turn red, then finally a  
deep succulent sweet black/purple.

## Soil Conditions

Tolerant to variety of soils, does best in  
sandy loam soil types (compared to clay  
loam soils). Commonly found in open  
woods, coulees and bluffs, on hillsides,  
along gullies and stream banks and on dry  
rocky soils from sea level to subalpine  
conditions.

## WHY GROW SASKATOONS?

Saskatoons also known as  
serviceberries or June berries, are  
very hardy, adaptable plants for  
northern climates with good pest,  
disease, and drought resistance. The  
plants have the capacity to be  
productive for many years. The best  
approach to establishing your orchard  
is to plant a minimum of 3 varieties.  
Other than harvesting, weed  
management and deer protection are  
the only major maintenance tasks.  
Recommend woodchip or clean straw  
for mulch, and fencing to prevent  
animal browse. May need bird netting  
for young seedlings. Mowing between  
rows or plants may also be required  
depending on orchard layout. Other  
uses include range restoration,  
plantings for birds and wildlife,  
windbreaks and low maintenance,  
native plant landscaping. Economic

Potential - Medium input, first harvest  
3 - 5 year. Hand harvesting  
recommended, unless growing on  
orchards 3 acres or more for machine  
harvesting to be economically  
feasible. Can obtain a 5,400 to 7,700  
lbs fruit/acre over a 10 year period;  
average planting densities are 880  
plants/acre, however, encourage to  
grow in combination with other fruits  
such as apple, pear, hawthorn, and  
mountain ash.

Nursery suppliers - Jungs Garden  
Center, The Draw, Bayfield, WI, Lawyer  
Nursery in MT. For very thorough guide  
to growing saskatoons, visit Richard St.  
Pierre's, a research  
scientist in  
Saskatoon, SK,  
Canada [http://  
www.prairie-  
elements.ca/  
saskatoons.html](http://www.prairie-elements.ca/saskatoons.html)



# Saskatoons - Social Benefits, Tastes, Potential Uses

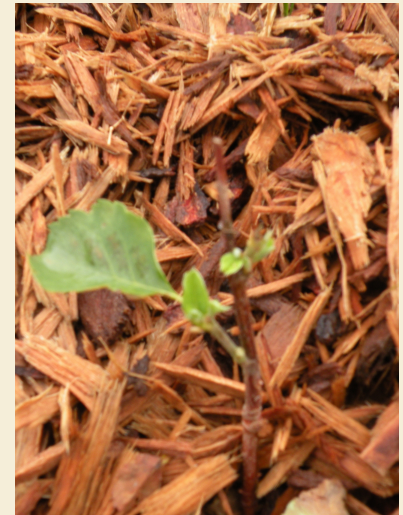
The saskatoon is one of the most commonly grown fruit-bearing shrubs on the prairies. Saskatoon Berries rank high in berries rich in anthocyanins with 562.4 mg / 100 g dry basis. The ORAC values for saskatoons are substantially higher than the values reported for blueberries (Clark *et al.*, 2001). The average ORAC value for saskatoons was 804 µmol Trolox equivalent per gram dry weight.

Consumers are looking for more natural and healthy fruits to add into their diet. Saskatoon Berries are good source of anthocyanins (Phytochemical Antioxidant)<sup>1</sup> with a high nutraceutical content similar to that of cranberry and blueberry. Saskatoons also contain more fiber, protein, and fat than most other fruits. Historically saskatoons were

highly regarded as a digestive aid and laxative. The Iroquois and Blackfoot nations also consumed saskatoons for treatment for the liver and to regain strength after childbirth. The wood, being extraordinarily hard, strong, and densely grained was utilized by legions of Native American warriors to make fine, straight-flying arrow shafts. (Staub, 2007; *75 Remarkable Fruits for your Garden*).

Fresh or frozen, the fruit can be used in baking, juice, jams, jellies, piefilling, syrup, toppings, ice cream flavourings and wine.

Saskatoon fruit matures unevenly from early to late July. Reddish-purple fruit is higher in pectin and more suitable for jams and jellies. Fully mature, dark-purple fruit is higher in sugar and more suitable for wine.



*Humans aren't the only ones who prefer this choice edible prairie berry. Deer browsed saskatoon seedling in June 2010 at Hilltop Community Farm. Photo by Rob McClure*



Strong fresh market appeal for U-pick operations as well as high demand for processing due to its versatility of products such as preserves, pies, sauces, soups, stews, wines, or dried with meats. The fact that dried saskatoons were used historically as an important article of trade showcases the unusually high regard Native Americans displayed toward these fruits. Like the cranberry, saskattons were used in a wide variety of soups, stews, and sauces as well as dried with venison.

The pioneers of the Great Plains chose the blossoms of the 'serviceberry' to decorate their services and graves, as the beautiful blooms coincided with spring thaw, meaning those who had died over the winter could finally be buried.

## - RECIPE SAMPLER -

### SASKATOON SAUCE

#### Sauce:

1 cup sugar  
2 tbsp cornstarch  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
dash of salt  
1 cup water  
2 cups Saskatoon (note can substitute other berries such as or blueberries or raspberries).  
3 tbsp lemon juice

In saucepan, combine sugar, cornstarch, nutmeg and salt. Add water; bring to a boil and continue cooking for 2 minutes. Add berries and return to a boil. Remove from heat, stir in lemon juice and cool. Yields 3 cups.

### & PIE

#### Saskatoon Pie:

Pastry for a 2-crust pie

4 cups Saskatoon berries 1/4 cup sifted flour; 1/2 cup suga; 1 tsp salt; 1/4 cup butter; 2 tbsp lemon juice

Line a pie plate with pastry and fill with washed and well drained Saskatoon berries. Combine sugar, flour and salt and sprinkle over the berries. Dot with butter; sprinkle with lemon juice and top with other

crust. Bake 45 minutes 400 F. Source - agriculture and agri-food Canada  
[www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca)