

Cherry tree survey: identification key

Step 1: note how the flowers or fruits are arranged



Flowers or fruits arranged in roughly cylinder-shaped spikes, 11 or more per spike



Go to step 2



Flowers or fruits on their own or in clusters of 10 or fewer



Go to step 3

Step 2: check the leaves and measure the flowers



Leaves hairless or with white hairs along midrib, sometimes only where veins join; flowers 10-15mm across



Bird cherries



Leaves have rusty or orange hairs underneath, each side of the midrib; flowers 8mm across



Rum cherry

Step 3: look at the stalks and leaf edges



Flower and leaf stalks densely hairy;
leaf edges have pointed teeth



Go to step 4



Flower and leaf stalks hairless or almost
hairless; leaf edges have pointed teeth,
often with thin, bristle-like tips



Go to step 5



Flower and leaf stalks hairless; leaf edges
have blunt or round teeth, often with a
claw-shaped gland at the tip



Go to step 6

Step 4: look at the sepals

Sepals are usually green and are the outermost parts of a flower, outside the petals.



Sepal edges are toothed; leaves hairless
on the upper side with hairy veins on the
underside



Spring cherries



Sepal edges not toothed; leaves hairy on
both surfaces



Fuji cherry

Step 5: look at the bark



Bark on trunk and branches very glossy,
purplish-brown and peeling in thin,
copper-brown strips



Tibetan cherry



Bark mostly dull grey or brown,
sometimes peeling to reveal shiny
red-brown on the trunk



Japanese cherries

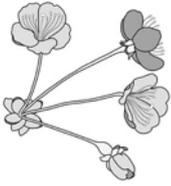
Step 6: check how flowers are arranged, measure the flowers and fruit



Flowers less than 20mm across, on stalks up to 15mm long, not arising from a central point; fruit less than 10mm long



St Lucie cherries



Flowers more than 20mm across, on stalks more than 15mm long, arising from a central point; fruit more than 10mm long



Go to step 7

Step 7: note the flower shape and look at the leaves



Flowers cup-shaped; leaves dull on the upper side, sparsely hairy on the underside



Wild cherry



Flowers saucer-shaped; leaves glossy on the upper side, hairless on the underside



Morello cherry

Photo credits

Bird cherry leaf: USDA Forest Service - Ogden Archive, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Rum cherry leaf: Bill Cook, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

Spring cherry flower: Wendy Cutler/VCBF

Fuji cherry flower: David Emley, Keele University

Tibetan cherry bark: Henk Meijers

Japanese cherry bark: Bob Press

St Lucie cherry flowers: Jean Tosti

Wild cherry flowers: Böhringer Friedrich

Morello cherry flower: Bogdan Janus

