

Chickasaw plum

(*Prunus angustifolia*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Chickasaw plum is a deciduous flowering shrub or small tree that produces profuse blooms, making for a spectacular spring display. Its flowers are 5-petaled and white, with many obvious yellow anthers. Blooms are cupped in yellowish-green sepals. Leaves have shiny green surfaces and finely toothed margins and are alternately arranged. Fruits are cherry-like drupes that are borne yellow, and turn a reddish or purplish-pink when ripe, usually in late summer. Its bark is rough and dark on the trunk, but more reddish on the branches. Chickasaw plum has an interesting growth habit that results in an irregular shape and a “twiggy” look.

Chickasaw plum flowers in early to mid-spring. It occurs naturally in dry hammocks, woodland edges, and disturbed areas and roadsides. The flowers are attractive to pollinators; the fruit is eaten by birds and other wildlife — and humans! (They are quite tart!).

Family: Rosaceae (Rose family)

Native range: Central and west panhandle to north/central peninsula

To see where natural populations of Chickasaw plum have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 7–9b

Soil: Dry to moist, sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 12–20' high, 10–20' wide

Propagation: Seed, transplant of suckers

Garden tips: Because it has a tendency to sucker, Chickasaw plum can form dense thickets and may be difficult to control. This same characterization, however, also makes it a good candidate for a buffer or screen planting and for soil stabilization. It can be propagated by seed or by harvesting and planting the suckers.

Chickasaw plum is often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo



Chickasaw plum in full bloom. Photo by Stacey Matrazzo