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Malpighia emarginata

[Synonyms : *Malpighia glabra*, *Malpighia puniceifolia*, *Malpighia puniceifolia* var. *obovata*, *Malpighia puniceifolia* var. *vulgaris*, *Malpighia retusa*]

WEST INDIAN CHERRY is a deciduous/evergreen shrub or tree. Native to the Caribbean and Central America (from Mexico south to Venezuela and Peru) it has small purple-pink to white flowers.

It is also known as Acerola, Barbados cherry, *Cerejeira-das-Atilhas* (Portuguese), *Cereza* (Spanish), *Cerise de Cayenne* (French), and *Grosella* (Panama).

Warning – the leaf hairs can be a skin irritant.

Emarginata means ‘with a shallowly notched tip’.

Authorities note that West Indian cherry is particularly tolerant of long periods of drought and blooms dramatically in subsequent heavy rain.

Like those of Barbados cherry (*Malpighia glabra*) the bright-red (occasionally yellowish-orange) fruit are eaten raw and made into preserves, jams, syrups and pies.

The postage stamps of Anguilla, one of the Caribbean Leeward Islands, have featured the cherry-like fruit – an indication of their popularity there.