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Prunus angustifolia

[Synonyms : *Prunus chicasa*]

CHICKASAW PLUM is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to south-eastern United States it has tiny, fragrant white flowers.

It is also known as Chicasa plum, Mountain cherry, Sandhill plum, and Sand plum.

The teeth on the leaves have red glandular tips.

Chickasaw plum is viewed as an endangered species in the wild in the state of New Jersey in the United States.

Angustifolia is derived from Latin *angusti-* (narrow) and *-folia* (leaved) components.

According to some authorities the name Chickasaw plum emerged because the tree is said to have been introduced to south-western states of the United States by North American Chickasaw Indians many centuries before the arrival of Europeans there.

Many North American Indian tribes including the Comanche ate the fruit fresh or dried and also stored them for food in Winter.

Locally the small cherry-like, bright-red or yellowish fruit which are occasionally cultivated are sold in the markets (often under the name ‘mountain cherries’) for making jams and other preserves for which they are said to be much prized. They are also eaten raw despite their tendency to be tart. Records show that towards the end of the 20th Century the fruit (which were being harvested from the wild) were attracting active commercial interest and their domestication was being considered to enable the processed fruit (as jams, sauces and other products) to be marketed on a far larger scale.

There is competition for the fruit however as they are also enjoyed by bears, deer, raccoons, squirrels and birds generally.

The plant’s habit of forming dense thickets has recommended it to environmentalists seeking species suitable for cultivation in areas subject to soil erosion.