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Prunus besseyi

[Synonyms : *Cerasus besseyi*, *Cerasus pumila* subsp. *besseyi*, *Prunus prunella*, *Prunus pumila* var. *besseyi*]

WESTERN SAND CHERRY is a deciduous shrub. Native to western North America it has small, white flowers.

It is also known as Bessey cherry, Cherry, Mountains cherry, and Sand cherry.

Besseyi commemorates an American botanist and mycologist, Dr. Ernst Athearn Bessey (1877-1957), who was Professor of Botany at Michigan State University 1910-1944. From 1899-1908 he explored Algeria, the Caucasus, Russia and Turkestan studying and collecting plants. He became President of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters in 1915 and in 1956 he was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the Botanical Society of America.

North American Indian tribes , including the Omaha, Ponca, Pawnee and Dakota have prepared the small, black to reddish-yellow fruit as a sauce and like plums have also dried the fruit for Winter food.

The fruit have been eaten locally in preserves, jams and pies.

Birds enjoy eating the fruit.

The shrub has been grown as an ornamental plant.