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Prunus sargentii

[Synonyms : *Prunus pseudocerasus* var. *sachalinensis*, *Prunus sachal*, *Prunus sachalinensis*, *Prunus serrulata* var. *sachalinensis*]

SARGENT CHERRY is a deciduous tree. Native to northern Japan it has small, bluish-pink flowers before leaves that turn orange-red in Autumn.

Sargentii commemorates an American horticulturist and dendrologist, Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927), who was the first director of the Arnold Arboretum (Harvard University) in Boston from 1873-1927. In 1869/70, after Harvard, then service in the Union Army during the American Civil War, followed by three years travelling Europe, he returned home and began management of Holmlea, the family estate, which provided him with horticultural experience. Then in 1872 he became professor of horticulture at the Bussey Institute, and in 1873 director of the Arnold Arboretum, the first of its kind in the United States and from 1873-1879 director Harvard Botanic Garden. A local farmer, Benjamin Bussey, had bequeathed land to Harvard and Sargent was instrumental in persuading Boston to buy it from Harvard (for part of the City's park system) and then to offer it back to the University on a 1000 year lease at \$1 per year (plus renewal option) and, if the Arboretum grounds are open to the public, also maintain the infrastructure. This was effected in 1882 and Sargent used the proceeds to develop the Arboretum. It had begun with 120 acres but by the time he died it had increased to 250 acres (now at the beginning of the 21st Century 265 acres). Today the Arboretum is known as part of Boston's 'Emerald Necklace' (a seven-mile network of parks and parkways). Authorities note that Sargent's extensive knowledge of trees and his appreciation of the need for their conservation was such that he played a significant role in the maintenance of American forests countrywide, and that he was chairman of the National Forestry Commission. He made several exploratory botanical trips in North America as well as, in 1903-1904, a world tour. He developed his own herbarium and library (eventually over 40,000 books and journals) which he left to the Arboretum and which, since 1954, have been absorbed into the Gray Herbarium. After his death the Massachusetts State House acquired a white spruce when the tree was planted in his memory in the grounds there. Sargent established and edited a weekly journal (1888-1897) *Garden and Forest, A Journal of Horticulture, Landscape Art, and Forestry*, and his published works include *The Silva of North America*, *The Manual of the Trees of North America*, and *Forest Flora of Japan*.

The small cherry-like, glossy purplish-black fruit are enjoyed by birds although it has been noted by some authorities that bullfinches tend to avoid the flowers.

The tree was introduced to North America in 1890.

Sargent cherry has been cultivated as a garden ornamental and as a street tree.