



## Aronia at CREC

**Aronia:** (*Aronia mitschurinii*) aka, Black Chokeberry, is a partly-native North American plant that was developed into a commercial fruit in Eastern Europe.

These varieties were reintroduced to the US in the last 20 years. The dark blue berries are very nutritious and high in anthocyanins and other polyphenols (the compounds in dark-colored fruit that we are encouraged to eat). Aronia is very productive (15 lbs/plant) but the fruit is astringent and generally requires freezing or processing before consuming. Most aronia juice used in the US is produced in Poland.

Production is reported to be over 1,650 acres in the Midwest and US overall. North Dakota has about 90 acres of aronia planted.

**Hardiness:** Zone 3. **Soil:** Wet to dry. Tolerant of salts. **Height:** 5-7 ft.

**Fruit Varieties:** *Viking, Nero, McKenzie, Galicjanka.*

**Landscape Varieties:** *Low Scape Mound<sup>®</sup>, Low Scape Hedger<sup>®</sup>, Ground Hug<sup>™</sup>, Iroquois Beauty, Autumn Magic*

The most-planted variety is 'Viking'. Genetic research shows that all varieties except 'Nero' are very similar to 'Viking.' In North Dakota, many growers have 'McKenzie'. This shrub was selected at the USDA-Plant Material Center in Bismarck as a shelterbelt shrub. It grows bigger and has the potential to produce more fruit than 'Viking'. 'Galicjanka' is another commercial shrub from Poland that is said to ripen more evenly – but all our aronia seem to ripen evenly.

Each shrub can yield at least 15 pounds of fruit after it is 5 years old. Plant the shrub with its root mass just below the soil surface (up to 1 inch deep). Spacing is 4-5 ft for home gardeners and 3 ft for commercial plantings. Aronia like full sun. Mulch to keep the roots cool, suppress weeds and retain moisture. Water deeply, as needed, the first year. With mulch, you may not need to water in the future, but use your judgement.

Pests seen at CREC include Pear Slug Sawfly, Lacebugs and Cherry Fruitworm. The first two eat or suck the leaves and may need to be controlled if they are too numerous. The pear slugs can be washed off with a stream of water. Both pear slugs and lacebugs can be controlled with a pesticide with the active ingredient: spinosad. You do not need to kill all the insects, just most, if they are really gnawing at your plants. We don't control for cherry fruitworm because we don't have very many. In wetter years, we see SWD damage.

<b>Plant Sources:</b>	<b>Honeyberry USA</b>	<b>Bergeson Nursery</b>
	19736 350th St. Bagley, MN 56621	4177 County Rd 1 Fertile, MN 56540
	<b>Local Greenhouses</b>	<b>Catalogs</b>

## Fruit Research at Carrington Research Extension Center

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