

‘Valentine’ Sour Cherry *By Bob Bors*



‘Valentine’ is the only variety in the Romance series that has red fruit. Other romance series varieties are burgundy or black when fully ripe. This variety is more vigorous than other Romance cherries and will produce a tree a foot or 2 taller than others. Often it is 8 or 9 feet tall but with pruning could be kept shorter.

Originally released in 2002, since then it has been reported to us to be one of the hardier cherries north of Saskatoon. Saskatoon is in hardiness zone 3, but we have had reports of it doing well in hardiness zone 2.

At harvest time, the tree is quite showy with all the red fruit. Because the tree are larger, yields are larger too.

We often recommend this variety as preferred for dried cherries because the lighter colour of the fresh fruit results in dried cherries that look red instead of black. But it is very good for other uses such as pies and baked goods. It could also be used for juice or wine but quite frankly, the darker coloured varieties give a deeper more colourful juice.

When the fruit turns red in early to mid-August, they will be sour and good to use in cooking but if you wait a week later they’ll be much sweeter and the red colour will be little darker.

For this variety, provide an area about 1.5 to 2.0 m² for the Bush to grow. It’s best to train it as a bush with a few major branches.

For more information on the care of University of Saskatchewan cherries, download “Growing and Using University of Saskatchewan Sour Cherries” from www.fruit.usask.ca .