



PRUNUS AVIUM

Fam. Rosaceae

DESCRIPTION

Deciduous tree with a conical crown. Cylindrical branchy trunk.

LEAVES

Alternate, simple ovoid-acute with serrated margins and an acuminate tip. The young leaves are bronzy in colour before turning dark green, and opaque on the upper surface. In autumn the colour changes again to orange-pink or red, before the leaves fall.

FRUITS

Fleshy drupes, more commonly known as cherries (from bright red through to dark purple when they ripen in early summer). The fruit contains a single stone that holds the seed. Ripen during June.

HABITAT

Probably of Asian origins, common in Europe and Italy since ancient times thanks to its characteristically sweet fruit.

DISTRIBUTION

In Italy cherry trees grow in hilly and mountain areas (sometimes close to areas in which broad-leaved trees traditionally grow); this species is hardy and withstands the cold.

FLOWERS

Conspicuous and fragrant with long petioles, 3 cm wide, white in colour with 5 petals. Carried in corymbs in mid-spring, just before or at the same time as the leaves appear. Blossoming between April and May, the cherry is a melliferous species visited by insects, bees in particular.

ROOTS

The root system has a perpendicular taproot and strong, deep, branchy lateral roots.

BARK

Smooth, polished and brown in the younger trees, when mature it becomes fissured, often detaching in parts that roll into characteristic horizontal strips.

INTERESTING FACTS

This is one of the two species of wild cherry from which the cultivated variety originates, such as the Piedmont White Graffione.

