

Wild Pear (*Amelanchier* spp.)

What is Wild Pear?

Wild Pear (also called serviceberry, shadbush, or Saskatoon berry) is a shrub or small tree commonly found along roadsides, fence lines, forest edges, and thickets. The ripe fruit, which resembles large blueberries, is purple-black and can be harvested from late summer to early fall; in some years they are very abundant. Several species exist on PEI but can be difficult to distinguish from each other.

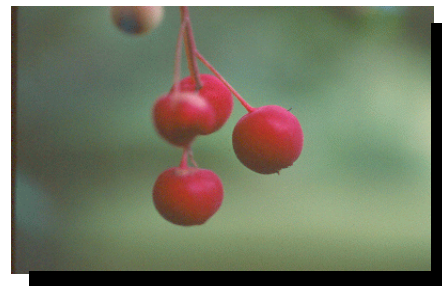


Figure 1. Wild pear berries grow in clusters and change colour from reddish to deep purple when ripe. ©Photo Credit: J.D.McAskill.

What are its uses?

Wild Pear berries are flavourful and delicious (but variable), making them one of the best forest fruits for jams, jellies, and even wines. They can also be eaten raw or in any kind of pastry, and can be dried or frozen for year-round use.

As you would expect, this is a favourite food for many birds, so competition can be heavy!

Where is it found?

One or more species will be found in any upland region on the Island.

What are the issues?

Sustainability: Some species are much less common than others, but it is difficult to imagine over-harvesting problems.

Outdoor Etiquette: Few forest boundaries are well marked and few landowners regularly inspect their woodlands. Harvesters could cross boundaries inadvertently or deliberately. Follow rules of outdoor etiquette: If you take it in - take it out! Carry a compass and know how to use it!

Cultivation: This plant is easily cultivated by those who want to grow their own fruit.



Figure 2. Wild Pear flowers provide a spectacular display in spring.

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