

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
Big Flats Plant Materials Center, Big Flats, New York

'Catskill'

Dwarf Sand Cherry

Prunus pumila var. depressa L.



'Catskill' dwarf sand cherry planted among rip rap, in New York.

'Catskill' dwarf sand cherry (*Prunus pumila var. depressa* (L.)) was released in 1997, by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Big Flats Plant Materials Center and the Pennsylvania Game Commission for its prostrate growth habit and immense root system.

Description

Catskill is a native, deciduous shrub with a prostrate growth habit. It attains a height of less than 3 feet and will spread up to 10 feet across. It is non-invasive and grows approximately 5 inches per year. Its simple leaves are 2-4 inches long and 1/2 -1 inch wide. The leaf surfaces are green above and white below and turn red in the fall. New shoots are reddish and shiny, and often have adventitious roots forming along their length as they contact the ground. It has a fibrous primary root system.

Catskill produces white flowers in the spring. The fruits produced in late summer are deep red to dark purple in color and are 1/2 to 5/8 inch in diameter.

Source

Catskill (PI-591700) is a population derived from seed of 16 plants along the Delaware River in Sullivan County, New York. The site of origin was the Red Barn Campground in Hankins, New York. The soils are coarse sand and the average precipitation in this area is 40 inches per year. It was growing in association with blackberry, rose, big bluestem and deertongue.

Conservation Uses

Catskill is mainly used in shoreline and streambank stabilization practices and riparian buffer plantings, where low vegetation is preferred. Its growth habit makes it adapted to areas with ice floe problems.

Due to its prostrate growth, it may become shaded out over time by taller vegetation. The fruits produced by Catskill are valuable for wildlife and is a very attractive plant and is used in ornamental landscaping.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Catskill grows well on gravelly or sandy soils along streams but has performed well on silt loam and calcareous soils. It will tolerate periodic flooding only for a short period. Its massive root system allows it to tolerate drought conditions.

It is found from Ontario, Canada to the New York-Pennsylvania border and is adapted to USDA hardiness zones 3b to 6b.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Establishment: Planting 1-0 nursery bare root stock of Catskill is the preferred method of establishment. Planting should be in the spring, prior to June 1st, or in the fall after October 10th. The stock should be dormant at the time of planting. Dig a hole wide enough to allow enough room for proper root establishment. It is not recommended to use peat moss, fertilizer or manure. The suggested plant spacing is in 4' x 4' or 5' x 5' blocks. Do not plant where reed canarygrass or reed grass is present since it does not compete well with aggressive, tall plants. If used as an ornamental, containerized plants can be planted in the spring to early summer.

Maintenance: Straw or other biodegradable mulch is recommended around each seedling for weed control. Plastic mulch or weed control fabric is used in ornamental landscaping sites. Herbicides or mowing are not recommended because there is no way to spray or mow under the canopy. Once established, Catskill requires little to no management.

Ecological Considerations

There are no major pests or disease problems that effect Catskill. However, *Leucostoma* spp. was found on dead and decaying branches. This fungus causes cankers by invading wounds or small dead branches, on rosaceous plants. There is no pesticide recommended for this fungus but pruning and removal of dead tissue will reduce

its incidence. Prevention of winter injury or insect damage may also help inhibit invasion of this fungus.

Seed and Plant Production

Catskill is propagated by seed or cuttings. It is intended for nurseries to produce this plant from seed, but hardwood cuttings are a viable alternative. Harvest the fruit when fully mature, in late July to August, by hand stripping and cleaning all the pulp away from the seed. Catskill requires a 120-day cold-stratification period for germination. Stratified seed can be sown early spring in the nursery bed. Hardwood cuttings root successfully using a rooting hormone.

Availability

For conservation use: Catskill is available in commercial nurseries across the Northeast US. For names of nurseries or for more information on its use, contact your local NRCS office or Soil and Water Conservation District.

For seed or plant increase: Catskill 1-year old material or seed can be obtained by nurseries by contacting the USDA NRCS Big Flats Plant Materials Center, to start their seed block for commercial production.

For more information, contact:
USDA NRCS Big Flats Plant Materials
Center
3266 State Route 352
Corning, New York 14830
607-358-6009 (phone)
Or
Shawna.clark@usda.gov

Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web

site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>

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