

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service  
James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas

# Rainbow Germplasm Wild Plum

*Prunus sp.*



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

Rainbow germplasm wild plum, *Prunus sp.*, was released from the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas in 1981.

### Description

Rainbow germplasm wild plum is a native, perennial, warm-season shrub or small tree. Plants sucker out, creating thickets ranging from 4 to 10 feet tall. The ½ to 1 inch fruit ranges in color from deep yellow to bright red and ripens from June to September. The leaves are simple and grow alternate or in a cluster of each other. The flowers of wild plum are white in color, fragrant and small. They bloom between February and May and typically have five petals with many stamens. There are approximately 1,303 seeds per pound.

### Source

Wild plum seed were collected from native plants found in Kent, Fannin, and Wise counties in Texas. These collections were combined to produce Rainbow.

### Conservation Uses

Rainbow has many conservation benefits. It is an important plant for wildlife food and cover. The thickets provide excellent cover for large and small mammals and game birds, as well as nesting cover for song birds. Wild plum also offers resting, escape and thermal cover for the lesser prairie-chicken. The fruit ripens from June to October supplying food for deer, small mammals, and

various types of birds throughout the summer and fall months. The early spring blooms provide nectar to many species of pollinators. Wild plum also provides excellent erosion control and plant diversity for surface-mined areas. It is also used in shelterbelt plantings and beautification in landscaping.

### Area of Adaptation and Use

Wild plum often occurs along fence rows, roadsides, and prairie streams. It performs best on well-drained sandy loam soils throughout northwest Texas and southern Oklahoma with 22 to 30 inches of rainfall.

### Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Wild plum is established from seed or root sprouts. Stratified seed is planted in April or May. Root sprouts should be planted in late fall, or after frost and before new leaf formation in the spring (dormant season). Plantings should be planned in compact groups or motts on 2 to 3 foot centers.

Planting sites should be prepared before seeding or transplanting. Work the site as necessary to reduce weed problems during the first year of establishment. Seedlings should also be protected from rodents and other small mammals feeding on tender foliage. Newly planted areas should be protected from livestock trampling.

### Seed and Plant Production

Rainbow germplasm is hand harvested when the fruit matures. The flesh is removed by hand or a seed macerator and the clean seed is dried and stored in a cool, preferably dark, container.

### Availability

*For conservation use:* Seedlings are available from several commercial seed companies.

*For seed or plant increase:* Breeder seed will be maintained by the USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas and is available by contacting the center.



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#### Citation

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<<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web  
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