

Prunus ×yedoensis

Yoshino Cherry

This is the species that dominates the Tidal Basin in Washington, DC. Several years past, I witnessed this rim of billowy white that surrounds the water—never have I seen more cameras aimed at the same subject. It's a shame that the allure and power of a cherry in flower cannot be transferred to the politicians. The habit of Yoshino Cherry is rounded to broad-rounded. The 2½- to 4½-in.-long, dark green leaves develop a semblance of yellow fall color. The ½- to ¾-in.-diameter flowers are light pink in bud, opening to clouds of white. Although fleeting, the effect is spectacular. The falling petals are reminiscent of giant snowflakes. Blackish, ½- to ½-in.-diameter fruit ripen in June and July. The species is used extensively for street plantings; in some cities, such as Macon, Georgia, it has become a monoculture, and festivals celebrate the tree's mystique. As a single specimen, Yoshino Cherry provides great beauty in the early spring garden. It flowers reasonably well when used as an understory tree with pines overhead. Grows 40 to 50 ft. high and wide; usually smaller under cultivation. Zones 5 to 8. Japan.

Cultivars and Varieties. 'Akebono' has soft pink flowers and a rounded, spreading growth habit. In youth it is extremely vigorous.

'Shidare Yoshino' is a weeping, white-flowered selection. A 10-year-old plant reaches 15 ft. high and 20 to 25 ft. wide. Often treated as synonymous with *f. perpendicularis*, but there is no guarantee that plants labeled *f. perpendicularis* will grow like 'Shidare Yoshino'.

'Snow Fountains' ('White Fountain' by Wayside) is a semi-weeping form with white flowers. Foliage is dark green and turns gold and orange shades in fall. This form has been widely promoted, but it lacks grace. Grows 6 to 12 ft. high and wide.



Prunus ×yedoensis 'Shidare Yoshino'



Prunus ×yedoensis, Yoshino Cherry