

Pyrus calleryana – Callery Pear/Manchurian Pear

Pyrus calleryana, commonly known as Manchurian or Callery Pear is an ornamental pear native to China. It is a deciduous tree growing from 6 to 10 m tall it is a spectacularly showy tree in Spring when it is covered with clusters of white flowers and again in autumn when its leaves turn bright yellow, mahogany and red. This is a pear tree grown for its flowers and fall foliage and not for edible fruit.

Trees have a very attractive pyriform shape. The deciduous leaves are oval, 5 to 7cm long, leathery and lustrous green, turning shades of yellow, orange, purple and red in the Autumn persist on the tree into early winter after most deciduous trees have shed their leaves. The white flowers are about 2.5cm across and arranged in clusters of a dozen or so, each cluster about 8cm across. They appear before and with the leaves in early Spring, and completely cover the tree so that all you see is white. The fruits are spherical brown pomes about 1.5cm in diameter.

Callery Pear is hard to beat for early spring flowers and spectacular autumn colour. It is tolerant of urban conditions, pollution and poor soils. It can be transplanted at any size. It grows fast and is a good choice for a quick screen or ornamental tree along a driveway, in a parking lot, or along a street. It also makes an interesting bonsai subject.

Pyrus calleryana is frost resistant and although it needs regular watering while young established trees are moderately drought tolerant, grows best in full sun and is suitable in a wide range of soils.

Propagation

PRETREATMENT: Seed requires 8 weeks cold stratification at 1°C. Seed will not generally break their dormancy unless exposed to a period of low temperature and moist conditions known as stratification possibly recreating the circumstances of a cold northern winter. This period of "chilling" or stratification can be accomplished first soaking the seed for 24 hours and then by placing seed in a moist, sterile (pasteurized) growing medium, such as a mix of equal parts clean sand and peat or sphagnum peat moss, in a plastic bag or disinfected container. Enclose the container in a tightly sealed plastic bag and place it in the non-freezer section of the refrigerator for two months. Towards the end of the stratification period seeds may start to sprout. Seeds are then separated from the stratification medium and germinated at 17 to 22°C.

SOW: Seed is best sown during the cooler months of the year as temperatures in excess of 20°C can induce secondary dormancy. Sow seed at a depth of 3 to 5cm in a good quality but well-draining potting mix. Keep the media lightly moist but not damp.

POTTING ON: Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in light shade in a cold frame or greenhouse for their first year.

PLANTING OUT: Plant them out in late Spring or early Summer of the following year.



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