

Selecting Cherry Trees 2026

Flathead Lake Cherry: A frequent question we get from customers regarding selecting a cherry tree is “Can I grow a Flathead Lake cherry tree if I don’t live on Flathead Lake?” The answer is “Maybe”

Flathead Lake acts as a giant heat sink, a thermal battery. Its insulating properties keep temperature swings to a minimum, providing the best conditions for cherry trees to thrive. This lake effect microclimate is the primary reason growing sweet cherries in Montana is successful year after year. The further away you live from the lake the less you’ll benefit.

So, yes, you can grow a Flathead Lake cherry tree if you don’t live near the lake, but you’ll likely only get cherries in years with mild winters. To increase the success of your sweet cherry tree plant them on the north side of anything that provides ample sunlight during the summer but shade in the winter. This location will help keep the tree in deep dormancy during winter and keep it from sustaining Southwest injury due to the thawing effects of periodic winter sunshine.

Pie Cherries: Of all types of cherries, pie cherries (also known as tart or sour cherries) are best adapted to northern climates.

Pie cherry trees are small compared to their sweet-fruited relatives, growing only to about 15 feet tall, and a few varieties only to about 8 feet-perfect for small spaces. Of all stone fruits, tart cherries are the most self-fruitful, but planting a second compatible variety will ensure even better pollination and fruit set.

We offer an extensive line of cherry trees for our 2026 season. Please refer to this chart below for more information about their key attributes and selling points. Our inventory changes throughout our selling season so be sure to check our website swanrivergardens.com for our most up to date availability.

CHERRIES	Avg Ripening Date	Blooms	Pollination	Zone	Flavor	Texture	Fresh	Pies	Jelly	Storage
Cherry Evans Bali (pie)	August	Early May	Self-fertile	3	Semi-sweet	Juicy	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good	Poor
Cherry Lapin (sweet-Flathead)	Late July to August	Early May	Self-fertile	4	Sweet	Firm	Excellent	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good
Cherry Mesabi (pie)	Early July	Early May	Self-fertile	4	Tart	Juicy	Fair	Excellent	Very Good	Poor
Cherry Meteor (pie)	Early July	Early May	Self-fertile	4	Tart	Juicy	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
Cherry Montmorency (pie)	Late June	Early May	Self-fertile	5	Tart	Juicy	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
Cherry North Star (pie)	Late June	Early May	Self-fertile	4	Tart	Juicy	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
Cherry Rainier (sweet-Flathead)	Mid-Late June	Early May	Lapin	5	Sweet	Firm	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Cherry Sweet Cherry Pie	Mid-July	Early May	Self-fertile	4	Sweet	Juicy	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

UPDATED January 01, 2026



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