The following cherry varieties are described on seedling rootstock of *Prunus avium* var. Mazzard or *Prunus mahaleb*, both producing more vigorous trees. Tree and fruit characteristics may be slightly different on the new, more dwarfing, cherry rootstocks.

Season of ripening may vary greatly from the southern to northern areas of the state. Sweet cherries may begin ripening in early June in southern New Jersey, with late season varieties maturing in mid to late July in the northern areas of the state.

All of the dark and white, yellow, or pinkish cherries are of the genus and species *Prunus avium*, while the tart cherries are of the species *Prunus cerasus*. Tart cherries are generally easier to grow because they bloom later, resist rain cracking, produce heavier, and are self-fruitful. Sweet cherries bloom earlier, can often be damaged by spring frosts, are more susceptible to rain cracking, and are often damaged by birds because they are of such high quality and sugar. The relative tolerance to rain cracking is described with each variety.

Many sweet cherry varieties are self-unfruitful and some cannot be pollinated by other cherry varieties. For this reason, it is important to plant the varieties recommended for pollination because they are cross-compatible and bloom in a season where they will pollinate the respective variety. Some new sweet cherry varieties are self-fruitful and great for home orchards. A chart is included to help you determine pollination needs.

**Dark Sweet Cherry Varieties**

*Cavalier* – An early season, medium size, firm, dark red variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. The tree is vigorous, moderately productive, slow to bear, and hardy.

*Viva* – An early season, medium size, dark red, medium firm variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. The tree is moderately vigorous, moderately productive, slow to bear, and susceptible to bacterial canker. Pollinate with Somerset, Viscount, Kristin, Royalton, Summitt and Rainier. Suggested for home orchard plantings because of its earliness.

*Hartland* – An early to early midseason, medium size, medium firm, very dark red variety with moderate susceptibility to cracking. Tree is medium-large, spreading, vigorous, productive, precocious, and tolerant to bacterial canker. Pollinate with Royalton, Rainier, Valera, Ulster, Emperor Francis, and Van.

*Viscount* – An early midseason, medium-large size, firm, dark red variety with moderate tolerance to cracking.

**White, Yellow, or Pinkish Whitegold**

*Emperor Francis*  
*Gold*
Flavor is good. The tree is large, very productive, and winter hardy. Michigan recommends that it not be planted on Mahaleb seedling rootstock. Pollinate with Somerset, Kristin, Viva, Royalton, Summit, Valera, and Ulster.

**Sam** – An early midseason, medium-large to large size, (fruit size depends on crop load), medium firm, very dark red variety with good crack tolerance. The flavor is only fair. The tree is vigorous, upright, productive, winter hardy, and tolerant to bacterial canker. It retains its firmness on the tree well. Pollinate with Hartland, Van, Emperor Francis, Hedelfingen Vogue, Gold, and Hudson.

**Valera** – An early midseason, medium size, dark red, firm variety with moderate susceptibility to cracking. The flavor is good. The tree is vigorous, and productive. Pollinate with Summit, Rainier, Royalton, Ulster, Emperor Francis, Hartland, and Van.

**Kristin** – A midseason, medium-large to large size, firm, very dark red variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. The flavor is described in New York as sweet, richly aromatic, and very good. The tree is large, vigorous, moderately precocious, productive, and very winter hardy. Pollinate with Viscount, Viva, Royalton, Summit, Rainier, and Valera.

**Summit** – A midseason, very large size, heart-shaped, very firm, dark red variety with moderate susceptibility to cracking. The flavor is excellent. The tree is large, spreading, and moderately productive. Pollinate with Somerset, Viscount, Kristin, Viva, Royalton, Rainier, and Valera. Suggested for home orchard plantings because of its size and flavor.

**Ulster** – A midseason to late midseason, medium-large size, medium firm, very dark red variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. The flavor is very good. The tree is vigorous, productive, and hardy. Reported to do well on Gisela dwarfing rootstocks. Pollinate with Viscount, Viva, Royalty, Summit, Rainier, and Valera.

**Black Gold** – A late midseason, medium-large size, firm, very dark red variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. Reported in New York to be a replacement for Hedelfingen. Trees are large, vigorous, productive, and very late blooming. Tree is self-fertile, late blooming, and needs no pollinating variety. Black Gold is a new variety from New York. Suggested for home orchard plantings because of its self-fruitfulness. Only one tree is needed.

**Van** – A late midseason, medium-large to large size, very firm, very dark red variety. Van is not being planted as much in New Jersey because it is very susceptible to cracking. The flavor is excellent. The tree is large, vigorous, very productive, and winter hardy. Pollinate with Somerset, Viscount, Kristin, Viva, Royalton, Summit, Rainier, Valera, and Ulster.

**Royalton** – A late midseason, large size, firm, dark red variety with moderate susceptibility to cracking, although in New York it is reported to be crack tolerant. The flavor is excellent. The tree is vigorous and upright, but slow to bare, and only of moderate productivity. Lacks hardiness in Michigan, but is hardy in New York. Suggested as a replacement for Hedelfingen in New York because it is larger and firmer. Pollinate with Viscount, Viva, Summit, Rainier, Valera, Ulster, and Hartland. Another good variety suggested for home orchard plantings.

**Hedelfingen** – A late season, medium to medium-large size, medium firm to soft, dark red, crack tolerant variety. The flavor is very good. The tree is moderately vigorous, precocious, very productive, and hardy, but susceptible to bacterial canker. Hedelfingen is one of the most widely
planted varieties in New Jersey. Pollinate with Ulster, Hartland, Emperor Francis, Van, Sam, Gold, and Hudson. Suggested for home orchard plantings because of its tree size, productivity, and crack tolerance.

**Somerset** – A late season, medium-large size, very dark red to purple black, very firm variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. The flavor is excellent and the fruit has good shelf life. The tree is moderately vigorous and spreading, productive and precious, with good tolerance to bacterial canker. Pollinate with Viscount, Viva, Royalton, Summit, Rainier, Valera, and Ulster.

**Sweetheart** – A late season, medium size, dark red, firm variety with moderate susceptibility to cracking. The flavor is very good. The tree is vigorous, with an upright growth habit, and very precocious. It is self-fruitful and does not need a pollinating variety.

**Hudson** – A very late, large size, dark red, firm variety with tolerance to cracking. Flavor is very good. The trees are very vigorous, very large on Mazzard, slow to produce but productive, and winter hardy. It is very late blooming and can be pollinated with Gold, Black Gold, White Gold, Sam, Hedelfingen, Van, and Hartland.

**White, Yellow, or Pinkish Sweet Cherry Varieties**

**White Gold** – An early midseason, medium-large size, yellow with red blush, firm variety with moderate tolerance to cracking. The flavor is good. The tree is large and regularly productive, with moderate tolerance to canker. The tree is self-fruitful and late blooming, and thus suggested for home orchard plantings.

**Rainier** – A large, firm, attractive, yellow cherry, with a bright scarlet red blush, and moderate tolerance to cracking. The flavor and shelf life are excellent. The tree is vigorous, precocious, and moderately productive. Pollinate with Viva, Royalton, Summit, Valera, Ulster, and Emperor Francis.

**Emperor Francis** – A midseason, medium-large size, firm, full pinkish red blushed cherry with good tolerance to cracking. The flavor is good and is also used for brining and canning. The trees are of medium vigor and size, productive, and hardy. Pollinate with Royalton, Summit, Rainier, Valera, Hartland, Van, and Hedelfingen.

**Gold** – A late season, small size, medium firm, whitish-yellow variety with good tolerance to cracking. The flavor is poor to fair. Gold is the number one variety for brining and maraschino cherries. The tree is vigorous, large, very productive, and winter hardy, with good bacterial canker tolerance. Gold blooms late, and is best pollinated with Hudson, Sam, Vogue, Hedelfingen, Van, Hartland, and Emperor Francis. Suggested for home orchard plantings because it is a strong tree, productive, and crack tolerant.

**Tart Cherry Varieties**

**All varieties are suggested for home orchard plantings also.**

**Montmorency** – The standard tart cherry with medium size, medium firm, bright red skinned, yellow flesh and clear juice, ripening in late June in southern New Jersey. The tree is moderately vigorous, medium-large, self-fertile, precocious, and productive.

**Galaxy** – A spur bearing Montmorency, that is reported to be easier to harvest, with a lightly smaller tree than Montmorency. The fruit characteristics are similar to Montmorency.

**Meteor** – Similar to Montmorency but with larger fruit, bright red skin, yellow flesh, and clear juice. It ripens 5 days after Montmorency. The tree is less vigorous than Montmorency, but very productive and winter hardy.

**Balaton** – A medium-large size, bright red skinned, dark juiced, firm variety ripening just after Montmorency. The fruit is slightly tart, but with a high sugar low acid ratio. The tree is self-fertile, productive, vigorous, and larger than Montmorency.

**Surefire** – A medium size, bright red skinned, red juiced variety ripening 5 days after Montmorency. The tree is self-fertile, regularly productive, moderately vigorous and upright, with more fruiting spurs than Montmorency. It also blooms later than Montmorency.

**North Star** – A small to medium size, moderately firm variety with dark red skin, flesh and juice, ripening about 12 days after Montmorency. Fruit does not retain its firmness as well as other sweets. The tree has low vigor and is a natural dwarf to semi-dwarf on seedling rootstocks. It is self-fertile, productive, and very winter hardy.
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