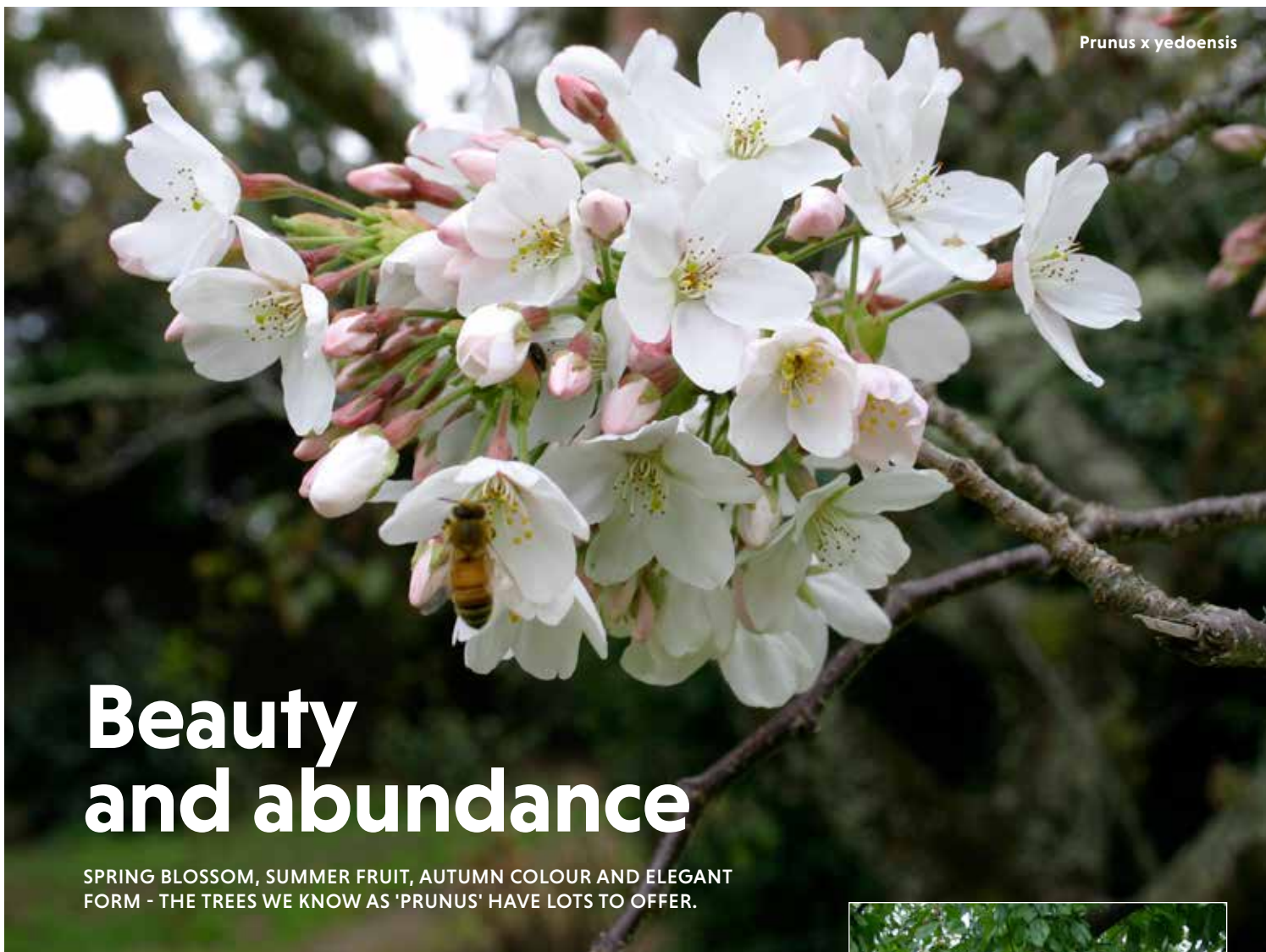


Prunus x yedoensis



Beauty and abundance

SPRING BLOSSOM, SUMMER FRUIT, AUTUMN COLOUR AND ELEGANT FORM - THE TREES WE KNOW AS 'PRUNUS' HAVE LOTS TO OFFER.

All the different varieties of plum, cherry, peach, nectarine, apricot and almond trees belong to the plant genus, *Prunus*. Some have been bred to give an abundance of beautiful fruit to eat. Others are grown for their spectacular display of spring blossom.

Cherry blossom

There are so many stunning cherry blossom trees that it can be hard to decide which one to plant. The main things to consider are the ultimate size and shape of the tree and its flowering time. If you have the space, planting two or more different varieties with different flowering times makes for longer lasting delight with a blossom show that stretches throughout spring. On the other hand, for an avenue planting,

choosing just one variety gives the most breathtaking spring display.

One of the favourite avenue trees, and earliest to bloom around the first week of September, is the white Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus x yedoensis*) and its famous New Zealand bred sister, *Prunus x yedoensis* 'Awanui'. In mid to late September 'Awanui' is a cloud of soft pink blossom. The large shell pink single flowers turn white as they age. Year by year, the tree develops a beautiful horizontal weeping form as it matures.

Another favourite for driveways and lawns, *Prunus* 'Accolade' fills its wide spreading branches with large clusters of rich pink double flowers. 'Accolade' is one of the best flowering cherry varieties for autumn foliage colour.



There is a plum tree (*Prunus domestica* variety) to suit every region, north or south. Find out more at waimeanurseries.co.nz

Prunus serrulata 'Shirotae' is the Mount Fuji cherry, another graceful spreading tree with beautiful horizontal branches that weep with age. In mid spring it is clothed in snow-white flower clusters amid fresh new leaves. A favourite pink form of this Japanese beauty is *Prunus serrulata* 'Shimidzu Sakura'. With pendant clusters of frilly double flowers that open white from pink buds, 'Shimidzu Sakura' is a modest sized tree that suits a smaller garden and has excellent autumn colour.

Weeping cherries, *Prunus subhirtella* 'Falling Snow' and 'Pendula Rosea' are perfect for small gardens, with layer upon layer of cascading branches. *Prunus serrula* produces dainty white flowers but is especially treasured for its beautiful metallic, mahogany-red bark with horizontal markings.

What not to plant

Tempting though it is, some blossom trees should not be planted. Deep cerise pink Taiwan cherry trees (*Prunus campanulata*) provide striking mid winter colour and tui adore them. But unfortunately this species (and its similar cultivars) is fast becoming one of our worst environmental weeds in warm northern regions. It crowds out native tree species that provide food for native birds all year round.

The sterile cultivar, *Prunus campanulata* 'Pink Cloud', is a softer shade of pink, but still a beautiful tree that puts on a stunning mass display in early spring. It is loved by the nectar feeders and is safe to plant.

Pruning

Trees not grown for fruit production don't need pruning unless it is to remove damaged branches or shape the tree. Pruning of flowering cherry trees should be done after flowering in late spring, as winter pruning means cutting off the flower buds. More importantly, there is a greater risk of silver leaf disease when trees are pruned in winter.

While apples, pears and most other deciduous fruit trees are pruned

TIP

Keep pruning tools clean and sharp, both to make the job easier and minimise disease. For extra care, wipe the blades with methylated spirits between plants to reduce spread of infection from one tree to the next.

during winter dormancy, plums, cherries and other stone fruit (ie *Prunus*) should be pruned when the weather is dry, ideally in late summer after harvest. If pruning in winter, always prune on a dry sunny day with preferably a few more dry days to come. This reduces the risk of diseases penetrating the pruning cuts. Seal any pruning cuts larger than 2cm with a pruning paste and spray with copper and spraying oil. This will protect the smaller cuts and reduce overwintering pests and diseases.

The art of successful fruit tree pruning is knowing what basic shape you want and which wood they produce fruit on. Plums, cherries, and apricots fruit on spurs for several years. New spurs form as old ones



Peach blossom

die. Pruning mainly involves removing most of the new growth, plus old dead or diseased wood, to control size and maintain an open shape for light and air movement, and easy picking.

Peaches and nectarines fruit on one-year-old wood; the wood that grew last year will carry fruit this year. Shortening this one-year wood to half its length encourages new growth while enabling size to be maintained.

Espaliering is an ideal way to grow stone fruit when space is limited. This involves training and pruning a framework of branches over a flat vertical space with wire supports.

Flowering cherry trees

CARE AND CULTIVATION

- ✔ **Choose a sunny sheltered location.** Full sun is best for blossom trees, as shaded branches produce less blossom than those in sun. But avoid windy sites; strong wind can strip the blossom from a tree and ruin its shape.
- ✔ **Choose a variety to suit your location.** Ideally, there will be enough space so that the tree's natural shape can reach its full potential without the need to prune for size control.
- ✔ **Plant in good soil.** The key to success with any tree is a thriving root system. Give them a good start in well-drained soil, enriched with compost and controlled release fertiliser. Trim roots that have become root bound and circling around the container.



Prunus 'Pink Cloud'

- ✔ **Stake young trees** to keep them straight and support strong root development. Install stakes before planting to avoid damaging the roots. Ideally use 2 or 3 stakes about 20cm away from the trunk, and secure with flexible fabric ties.
- ✔ **Water young trees during dry spells.** Mulch to keep moisture in, especially in the first year after planting and on hot or windy sites.
- ✔ **If suckers grow from the base** of the tree, remove them before they spoil the shape of the tree.

Little fruit trees

Modern dwarf varieties of stone fruit offer the works for small gardens - fruit and blossom on a baby tree that is suitable for growing in a tub. Dwarf fruit trees require minimal pruning if any. Some also have the advantage of reduced winter chill requirements which means they will fruit well in milder North Island climates.

Dwarf Cherry Griotella™ is stunning with white blossom in spring, then tart bright red fruit that's perfect for pies and preserves. Dwarf apricot 'Aprigold' bears full size, flavoursome fruit early in the season

and is well suited to the warmer areas of New Zealand.

Dwarf peach 'Honey Babe' and dwarf nectarine 'Nectar Babe' make a good garden pair, one pollinating the other for more prolific fruiting. Both have showy pink blossom in spring.

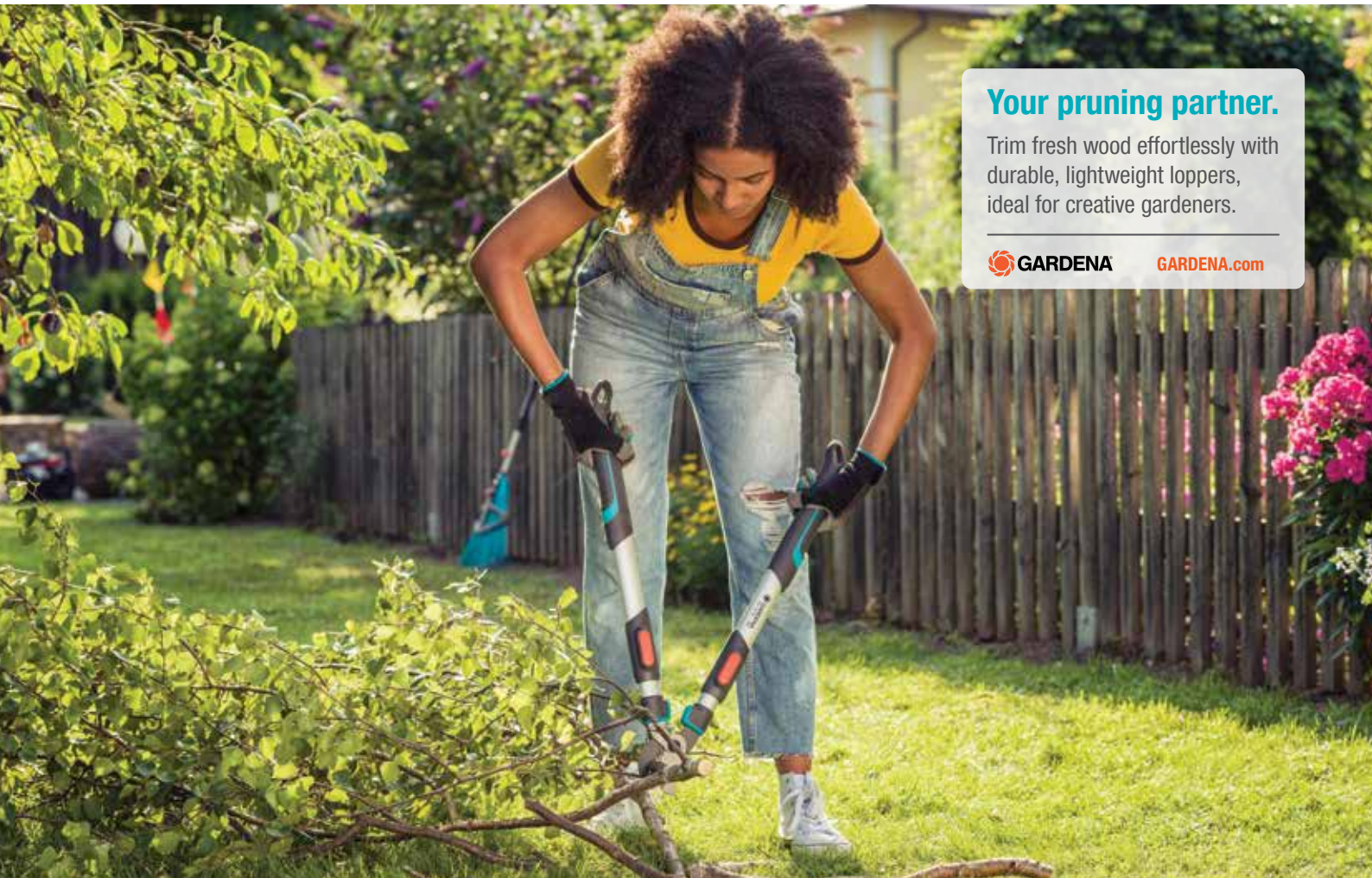
Dwarf peach 'Rose Chiffon' produces beautiful double rose red blossom in spring followed in late summer with juicy, white fleshed fruit. This one is best grown in northern areas of the country to ensure the fruit ripens sufficiently. Dwarf Nectarine 'Garden Delight' also has a low chilling requirement and showy pink blossom. 🍃



Dwarf nectarine tree



Dwarf fruit trees need little pruning - simply a light trim at the end of summer to remove any dead or over-crowded branches.



Your pruning partner.

Trim fresh wood effortlessly with durable, lightweight loppers, ideal for creative gardeners.

 **GARDENA**

[GARDENA.com](https://www.gardena.com)