

Sorbus torminalis



Sorbus torminalis (wild service tree) is common throughout Europe as far as the Caucasus and North Africa. Wild service trees are found in the secondary canopy layer in deciduous forests alongside *Quercus petraea*, *Fraxinus angustifolia* and *Pyrus pyrastrer*. This species was described in 1763 by Austrian botanist and doctor Heinrich von Crantz. *Sorbus torminalis* is an upright, mostly single-stemmed tree with a conical crown shape seven to ten metres wide but multi-stem forms also occur. In most situations, the wild service tree reaches a height of ten to fifteen metres but can even grow as tall as twenty-five metres in the wild.

In April and May *Sorbus torminalis* produces white flowers with the characteristic Sorbus scent. In flower, the wild service tree is a paradise for bees and other insects on account of the very extensive blossom that can cover the tree. The fruits are mostly apple-shaped, brownish in colour and speckled white. After the first frost they become soft and edible. In terms of flavour, they are similar to medlars. Birds or small mammals are regular visitors to the wild service tree in the autumn and thus responsible for distributing the seeds. The foliage can be very variable in form, having jagged edges with a far broader and prominent pointed lobe close to the base. In the autumn the foliage turns from deep green to yellow, orange and finally russet-brown. The bark of juvenile trees is smooth and light brown. In older trees, the bark peels off.

As a healthy tree, which is attractive all year round, *Sorbus torminalis* is a wonderful choice with great potential for the future. The wild service tree is a perfect tree for parks, streets or medium-sized gardens. Once established, it is a very drought-tolerant species. It responds very well to late autumn pruning even though natural form and beauty are preferable. The tree is not fussy about soil although prefers clay or loam and neutral or chalky growing conditions. *Sorbus torminalis* can be long-lived and in favourable conditions attain a considerable size.

SEASONAL COLOURS



TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, woodland planting stock | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

USE

Location: avenue, park, central reservation, in containers, roof garden, large garden, cemetery, countryside, ecological zone | **Pavement:** none, open, sealed | **Planting concepts:** food forest, Eco planting, Landscape planting, urban planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: pyramidal | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 10 - 15 m | **Width:** 7 - 10 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5B - 9B

ASPECTS

Wind: tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil, all soils | **Nutrient level:** moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, butterflies, birds, small mammals, nectar value 3, pollen value 3 | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: corymbose, striking, standing, big, flower-scented | **Flower colour:** white | **Flowering period:** April - May | **Leaf colour:** matt green, buds grey-green, underside yellow-green | **Leaves:** deciduous, palmate, leathery, underside hairy, doubly serrate, lobate | **Autumn colour:** yellow, yellow-orange, orange, red-brown | **Fruits:** striking, edible, small, berry | **Fruit colour:** cinnamon-brown, green | **Bark colour:** grey-brown | **Bark:** peeling, smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour:** red-brown | **Twigs:** hairy, bare, thickly branched | **Root system:** deep, extensive, central root