Common name: **Black Cherry**  
Genus Species: **Prunus serotina**

**Description:** Black cherry is a single-stemmed, deciduous tree growing 30 to 125 feet tall. Its tiny, fragrant, white flowers have both male and female parts and are clustered into showy, elongated spikes along the branches.

**Habitats:** Black cherry is commonly found in moderately moist woods, forest openings, old fields, and fencerows. In warmer areas, it is confined to canyons, valleys, and rich bottomlands.

**Phenology highlight:** Black cherry flowers bloom on graceful drooping racemes, 2.5 to 6 inches long. A raceme is a flower cluster with separate flowers attached at equal distances along a central stem.

**Species facts**
- Black cherry flowers are pollinated by native bees and other insects.
- The fruits are consumed by at least 33 species of birds and many mammals, including the red fox, black bear, raccoon, opossum, squirrel, and rabbit.
- Black cherry bark was used historically as a cough remedy, tonic, and sedative.
- Black cherry wood is a rich reddish-brown color and is strong, hard, and close-grained – one of the most valued cabinet and furniture woods in North America.

**Why observe this species?** Black cherry is a USA-NPN regional plant species. Regional species are ecologically or economically important. NPN integrates these observations to better understand plant responses within the different geographic regions of the nation. In addition, this species is an allergen. Observations on its phenology provide valuable information to benefit people with allergies and the public health community.

**Tip for observing this species:** If drought seems to be the cause of leaf color or fall for a plant, please make a comment to that effect.

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenologyproject.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org).
**Black Cherry (Prunus serotina)**

**Note:** leaf, flower and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase for each; for example, if you record Y for “open flowers” you should also record Y for “flowers or flower buds.”

**Breaking leaf buds**
One or more breaking leaf buds are visible. A leaf bud is "breaking" once a green leaf tip is visible at the end of the bud, but before the first leaf from the bud has unfolded to expose the leaf stalk (petiole).

**Leaves**
One or more live unfolded leaves are visible. A leaf is "unfolded" once its full length has emerged from the bud so that the leaf stalk (petiole) is visible at its point of attachment to the stem. Do not include dried or dead leaves.

**Increasing leaf size**
A majority of leaves have not yet reached their full size and are still growing larger. Do not include new leaves that continue to emerge at the ends of elongating stems throughout the growing season.

**Colored leaves**
One or more leaves (including any that have recently fallen from the plant) have changed colors. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.

**Flowers or flower buds**
One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.

**Open flowers**
One or more open fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between open flower parts. Do not include wilted or dried flowers.

**Fruits**
One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For black cherry, the fruit is a small, fleshy "cherry" that changes from green to purple-black or black.

**Ripe fruits**
One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For black cherry, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned purple-black or black.

**Phenophases not pictured:** Falling leaves; Recent fruit or seed drop

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