

# EUROPEAN MOUNTAIN ASH

*Sorbus aucuparia*



**E**uropean mountain ash, also known as rowan, is native to Europe and Northern Asia. The popular ornamental tree has escaped cultivation in the United States and Canada.

Despite its name, European mountain ash is not a true ash. It is a deciduous tree that can grow up to 65 feet tall. If the tree is pruned, it produces stump sprouts, which gives it a shrub-like appearance. European mountain ash grows quickly and can reproduce from shoots and roots or by seed. Insects pollinate their flowers, and berries are spread primarily by birds (but also by mammals such as deer and bear).

## WHERE DOES IT GROW?

European mountain ash is adapted for northern temperate climates. It is tolerant of both frost and shade. In Southeast Alaska, it can be found in urban areas and has spread to forests, meadows, stream banks, and shorelines. In its native range, it grows at elevations up to 6,500 ft. Thousands of wild trees have been documented in the Juneau area, including uninhabited islands over two miles from mainland Juneau.



## IDENTIFICATION

European mountain ash can grow as a tree or a shrub. Leaves are alternate and have 11-17 leaflets. Leaflets have saw-toothed edges and come to a sharp point at their ends. Flowers are white with

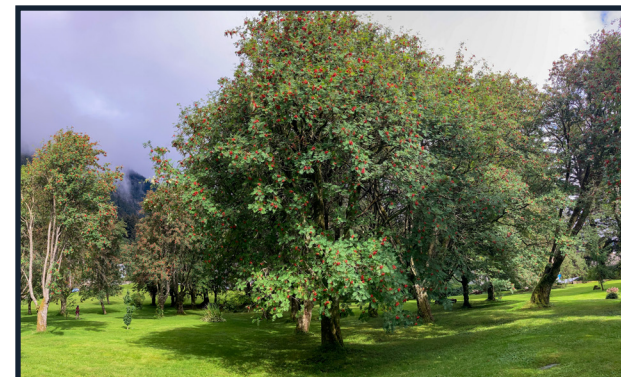


five petals each and grow in dense clusters. The fruits are orange to red, usually in bunches of 25 or more.

The easiest way to differentiate the non-native species from our native Sitka mountain ash (*Sorbus sitchensis*) is from the leaves. Sitka mountain ash leaves have 7-11 leaflets and are rounded at their tips.



European Mountain Ash      Sitka Mountain Ash



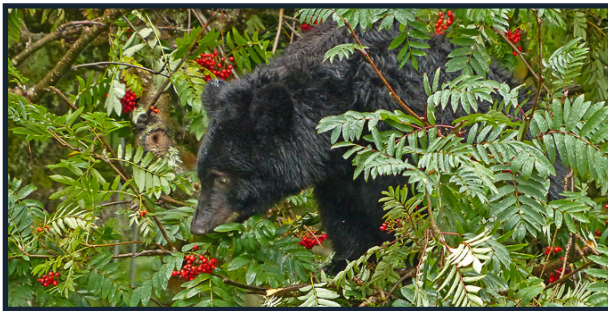
## WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

European mountain ash outcompetes native plants that provide wildlife habitat and food for both humans and animals.

Trees can have extensive root systems. At high densities, these roots can potentially alter soil nutrient availability.

Mature individuals produce an abundance of highly palatable berries. Birds and bears may prefer to forage on mountain ash over native berries.

Saplings and small trees form dense thickets in the shrub layer, restricting growth of conifers.



## FUN FACTS

European mountain ash is a treasured species in its native range. Medieval European communities used mountain ash as protection from curses and witches.

Northern Europeans have used wood from European Mountain Ash to make longbows and other tools since the late Stone Age.

The berries are rich in vitamins and antioxidants. They are used as traditional medicines to treat ailments such as scurvy and kidney stones.

## MANAGEMENT

### Prevention

Help protect our Alaska ecosystems.

**Don't purchase and plant European mountain ash!** Opt for native trees like aspen or willow or ornamental trees like maples and hawthorns.

### Manual Removal

You can pull seedlings and young saplings; just be mindful to remove the full root system. Repeatedly cutting back stump sprouts may eventually deplete the resources of adult trees, but this requires repeated pruning over many years and trees should not be allowed to flower.

### Chemical Control

"Cut-stump" and frilling (or "hack-and-squirt") are two chemical control methods you can use for European mountain ash and other woody invasive plants.

**Cut-stump:** fully cut down the tree and immediately apply herbicide to the stump.

**Frilling:** make incisions around the trunk (below the first branch) and use a spray bottle to apply herbicide to the cuts.

### Always follow herbicide label

**instructions.** See AK DEC's Pesticide Control Program for more information on herbicide use and regulations.

## Need help? Reach out!

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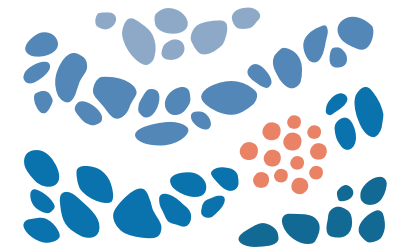
For more information on European Mountain Ash and other invasive plants in Southeast Alaska, go to:

[bit.ly/SEAKinvasives](https://bit.ly/SEAKinvasives)



Funded by the US Forest Service and Copper River Watershed Project - thank you!

We connect and support local partners across Southeast Alaska to advance community-based watershed stewardship and restoration.



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