



# European Mountain Ash

*Sorbus aucuparia* L.

**Common Names:** European mountain ash, rowan

**Native Origin:** Originally from most of Europe, northern Africa, and western Asia

**Description:** A deciduous tree in the rose family (Rosaceae) that reaches heights of 25 to 30 feet and widths of 15 to 25 feet. The main trunk is often short, becoming multi-branched and the crown is initially elliptical but becomes wider with age. Bark is light grayish brown, generally smooth with numerous lenticels when young. Cracks, splits and scaly patches develop on older trunks. Leaves are alternate, pinnately compound, and 5" to 9" long. Individual leaflets are serrated on their upper halves, 1 to 1.5 inches long, dull dark green above and paler green below. In fall, leaf color is red to yellow, although sometimes leaves simply drop green. Showy clusters of small white flowers appear in late spring to early summer. Small, orange-red fruits, 3/8 inch in diameter are born in terminal clusters that ripen in fall. Fruits are usually eaten by birds and often do not persist on the



tree into the winter. Seeds germinate quite readily in the landscape. Thousands of seeds are produced per plant per year. Seeds have a strong innate dormancy that lifts gradually over a few years. The seeds remain viable in the soil for five years or more. Birds consume the fruits in the fall and helped spread it.

**Habitat:** It favors cool to cold climates, full sun, and well-drained, loamy acidic soils. Trees can grow in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common.



**Distribution:** This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It has been reported to be invasive in Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington and forest communities in Wisconsin. It has naturalized in 27 northern states throughout moist cool regions of North America.

**Ecological Impacts:** This species has escaped ornamental plantings and is able to invade, integrate and dominate plant communities.

### Control and Management:

- **Manual-** Hand pull small seedlings or dig up young trees
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides. There are many possible ways to apply such herbicides, e.g., on foliage, on cut stems, as an injection, or as a basal spray directed to the bark of uncut stems. Repeat applications may be necessary to reduce densities. Follow label and state requirements. Managers should evaluate the specific circumstances of each infestation, seek professional advice and guidance if necessary, and use the herbicide in a manner that is consistent with the product label and other state requirements.
- **Natural enemies-** This plant species is susceptible to borers, cankers, rusts, aphids, sawflies, scales and frequently develops fire blight.

**References:** US Forest Service Fact Sheet ST599- <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees/SORAUCA.pdf>, [http://akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/pdfs/species\\_bios\\_pdfs/Species\\_bios\\_SOAU.pdf](http://akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/pdfs/species_bios_pdfs/Species_bios_SOAU.pdf), [www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=321](http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=321), <http://plants.usda.gov>, [www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/soau1.htm](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/soau1.htm), [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/s/sorauc/sorauc1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/s/sorauc/sorauc1.html), [www.invasive.org/browse/genus.cfm?id=Sorbus](http://www.invasive.org/browse/genus.cfm?id=Sorbus), <http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/aginfo/trees/handbook/th-3-89.pdf>