

Prunus spinosa **(blackthorn or sloe)**

Dominion: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Plantae

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Rosales

Family: Rosaceae

Genus: *Prunus*

Species: *P. spinosa*



***Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn or sloe)** is a species of *Prunus* native to Europe, western Asia, and locally in northwest Africa.

Prunus spinosa is a deciduous large shrub or small tree growing to 5 m tall, with blackish bark and dense, stiff, spiny branches.

Blackthorn is a good fire wood that burns with a good heat and little smoke



The **leaves** are oval, 2–4.5 cm long and 1.2–2 cm broad, with a serrated margin.

The **flowers** are 1.5 cm diameter, with five slightly creamy-white petals; they are produced before the leaves in early spring, and are hermaphroditic and insect-pollinated.



The **fruit**, called a "sloe", is a drupe 10–12 mm in diameter, black with a pale purple-blue waxy bloom, ripening in autumn, and harvested in October or November after the first frosts. Sloes are thin-fleshed, with a very strongly astringent flavour when fresh.

In Britain so-called sloe gin is made from them. In Navarre, Spain, a liqueur called *patxaran* is made with sloes. In Italy the "*prunella*", "*prospino*" and "*bargnolino*". In France the *prunelle* in Japan the *umeboshi*.