Nature's Notebook
Phenophase Photo Guide

Prunus armeniaca
Apricot

John Muir National Historic Site

Why Observe?

Understanding how seasonal climatic events such as rainfall and temperature changes affect fruit production informs fruit growers on which types of fruit are best suited to grow in their region and how successful the harvest will be in a given year. Valuable insight can also be obtained when reporting data after an abnormal weather event, like a sudden freeze or drought. Additionally, knowing the timing of flowering and fruit ripening can help fruit growers make decisions regarding the optimal times to plant trees, apply pesticides, prune trees, and harvest ripe fruit.

Photo credit: Karunakar Rayker via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY 2.0

Tips for Identification

A deciduous tree that can grow 26 to 39 feet tall. Leaves are broad ovate with pointed tips. Flowers are white to pinkish in color, self-pollinated, and grow singly or in pairs in early spring before the leaves.

Be aware there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your plant may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a "?" for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.

Photo credit: National Park Service

This Phenophase Photo Guide has been vetted by the USA-NPN NCO. It is appropriate for use as a supplement to the Nature's Notebook *phenophase definition sheet for this species.*

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Breaking leaf buds
One or more breaking leaf buds are visible on the plant. A leaf bud is considered "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 base at its point of attachment to the leaf stalk (petiole) or stem.


Photo credit: National Park Service

Leaves
One or more live, unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. A leaf is considered "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from a breaking bud, stem node or growing stem tip, so that the leaf base is visible at its point of attachment to the leaf stalk (petiole) or stem. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.


Photo credit: National Park Service

Increasing leaf size
A majority of leaves on the plant 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.


Photo credit: National Park Service

Colored leaves
One or more leaves show some of their typical late-season color, or yellow or brown due to drought or other stresses. Do not include small spots of color due to minor leaf damage, or dieback on branches that have broken. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.


Photo credit: National Park Service

Flowers or flower buds
One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers.

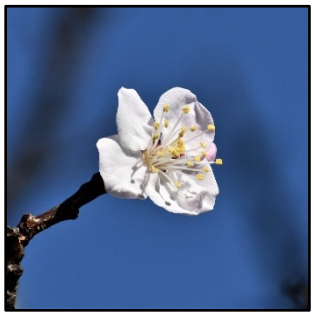
Photo credit: National Park Service

Open flowers
One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers.


Photo credit: National Park Service

Fruits
One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Prunus armeniaca*, the fruit is a fleshy "apricot" that changes from green to reddish-green to orange.


Photo credit: Fir0002 via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 3.0 (cropped)

Ripe fruits
One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Prunus armeniaca*, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned orange.

Phenophases not pictured: Falling leaves, Recent fruit or seed drop

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