

# Crabapple

*Malus spp.*

More than 800 cultivars and varieties of crabapple are documented with more named every year. Tree size, growth, habit, blossom and fruit color, and branching habit vary widely, but most grow 20 feet tall and wide. Many have excellent fall color in addition to the beautiful blossom and colorful fruit. Fruits may be red, yellow, or green and vary in size from very small to nearly two inches in diameter. Crabapple has an unusual branching habit providing visual interest even in dormant seasons. These attributes make Crabapple a popular addition to the landscape or garden environment. The tree is adaptable to most sites, even including compacted soils and those prone to drought. Wildlife thrives in and around Crabapples.



## Identification

### Leaves

Deciduous, alternate, simple, oval, serrate, 2-4 inches long and <2 inches wide, green in summer, yellow, orange, and gold in autumn.



### Bark/Wood

Young trees have smooth fruitwood bark that becomes gray or gray-brown, scaly, and vertically cracked with age.



### Flower/Fruit

Monoecious; very showy, pink, red, or white blossoms in spring prior to leaves with pleasant fragrance. Red, yellow, or green pome fruit up to 2" in diameter.



### Form

Small tree with broad form. Branches droop as tree grows. Single or multiple trunks easily trained.



### Uses

Crabapple fruits are used in wines and jellies, though the overwhelming common use is as a landscape specimen in yards, gardens, and parks.

### Ethnobotany

### Native Distribution

Temperate ranges of North America, Europe, and Asia.

### Establishment

Easily transplanted and established. Prune for desired form.

### Growing Conditions and Culture

Mature Size 25'Hx25'Wx2'dhb  
 USDA Zone 4-8  
 Light Requirements Full Sun

Soils Diverse  
 Drought Tolerant? Yes  
 Inundation Tolerant? No

### Pests/Damaging Agents

Crabapples are susceptible to fire bight, powdery mildew, rust, and apple scab. Chemical controls are often necessary though many varieties have inbred resistance.

### Similar Species

### Propagation

Seed - cold stratify. Cuttings. Grafting.

### Source(s)

Seed collected from Walden, NY and Cornell Plantation, NY.