

# Flowering Crabapple



# Flowering Crabapple (*Malus hybrids*)

## General Description

Ornamental crabapples are a group of small flowering trees used for landscape plantings. They are valued for their foliage, flowers, fruit and variations in form and size.

### Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Reddish-brown, with several imbricate scales.

Bud Size - 1/8 to 1/4 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, ovate to elliptical-oblong.

Leaf Margins - Finely-serrate to irregularly toothed or lobed.

Leaf Surface - Variable, glabrous to pubescent.

Leaf Length - 1½ to 3¼ inches.

Leaf Width - 3/4 to 2 inches.

Leaf Color - Dark or olive-green above, paler green beneath; yellow fall color. Cultivars with variable purplish leaf colors are also planted.

### Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Umbel or corymb-like racemes.

Flower Color - White to pink to rose to carmine-red shades.

Fruit Type - A pome with persistent or deciduous calyx. If fruit is less than 2 inches in diameter it is typically classified as a crabapple.

Fruit Color - Range from red to yellow to green.

### Form

Growth Habit - Range from tall informal-spreading to densely-oval, globose, narrow-upright or pendulous forms.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; medium, winter.

Crown Height - 10 to 25 feet.

Crown Width - 15 to 25 feet, except narrow-upright cultivars.

Bark Color - Gray-brown to reddish-brown.

Root System - Spreading, fibrous.

## Environmental Requirements

### Soils

Soil Texture - Adapted to a variety of soils, prefers a heavy loam soil.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 7.5, prefers slightly acidic soils.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 3.

### Water

Prefers well-drained, moist soils. Moderately drought tolerant. Tolerance varies by hybrid parentage.

### Light

Full sun.

## Uses

### Conservation/Windbreaks

Small tree for farmstead windbreaks and highway beautification.

### Wildlife

Crabapples provide fair cover and high quality fruit and browse for many birds and mammals. Rodents and rabbits can destroy trees by girdling the stem or trunk.

### Agroforestry Products

Wood - Desirable for smokehouse kindling and firewood.

Food - Fruit used fresh or processed.

Medicinal - Used as an antibiotic and for indigestion, dysentery and diarrhea.

### Urban/Recreational

Used for ornamental landscaping, specimen, shade tree, boulevards and screens.

## Cultivated Varieties

*Malus* x 'Centurion' - Rose-pink flowers.

*M.* x 'David' - White flowers, red fruits.

*M.* x 'Hopa' - South Dakota introduction. Old pink-flowered, apple scab susceptible cultivar.

*M.* x 'Kelsey', 'Selkirk', 'Thunderchild' - Canadian cultivars with rose-pink flowers. 'Thunderchild' has purple leaves and is disease resistant.

*M.* x 'Radiant', 'Red Splendor', 'Vanguard' - Minnesota cultivars. All have pink to rose-pink flowers.

*M.* x 'Spring Snow' - White flowers, no fruits, sterile.

## Related Species

Common Apple (*Malus pumila*)

Siberian Crabapple (*Malus baccata*)

## Pests

Disease pests include fireblight, apple scab, frog-eye leaf spot (black rot). Insect pests include cankerworms, fall webworm and apple maggot. Cultivars have variable resistance to many of these pests. Extracts of fruit have been used as an attractant to trap insect pests.