

Crabapples (*Malus*) make beautiful landscape plants. Extremely hardy to northeast Ohio and urban settings they adapt to any soil condition as long as they receive full-sun and good drainage. All crabapples fruit late summer/early fall and range in color from red to orange, yellow and gold. The two inch and smaller fruits are too astringent for us to eat but birds relish them. In northeast Ohio, crabapples bloom for two weeks in early May. Their blossoms are usually single and come in shades of white, pink and red.

Many older cultivars, created for their floral display only, are prone to disease and are too big for the average landscape. Today, smaller, disease resistant varieties are created which have persistent, colorful fruit for winter interest. With over 200 cultivars on the market many disease prone crabapples still exist so consult your local extension agency or arboretum for recommended varieties.

SELECTING CRABAPPLES

Step 1 - Determine how the crabapple is to be used in the landscape. They can screen views, guide the eye towards residential entrances, shade and enclose a patio or deck, or simply be a stunning specimen plant. Step 2 - Consider which crabapple form and size best fulfills that purpose. Step 3 - Cross-reference the desired form and size with disease resistant varieties for your locality. Step 4 - Of these, consider fruit attributes such as color, size, persistence, reliability of fruit set and wildlife value. Step 5 - Lastly, consider flowers; most crabapples already have pretty blossoms.

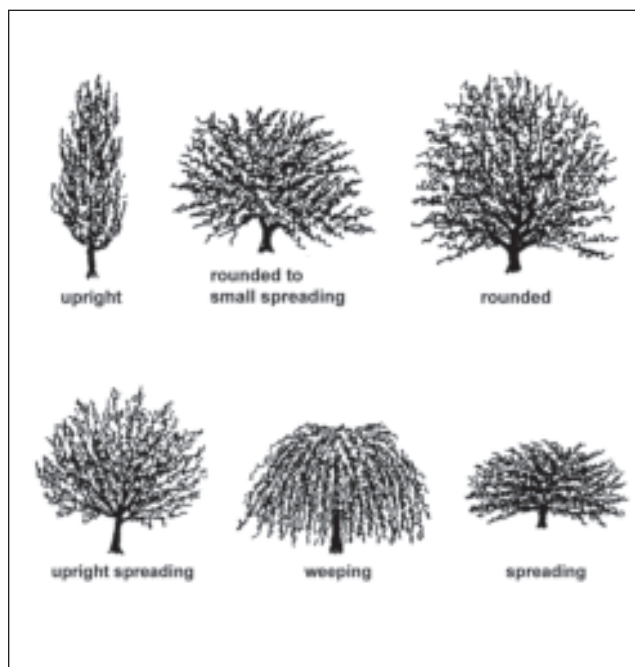
PLANTING CRABAPPLES

Step 1 - Dig a hole wide and deep enough to accommodate the growing root system. (See Landscape Bulletin #2) Step 2 - Plant the tree at a slightly higher level than the ground. Step 3 - Fill in around the tree with fresh, clean topsoil. Step 4 - Mulch well to conserve soil moisture and reduce weed growth. Step 5 - Stake large trees to prevent swaying.

CARING FOR CRABAPPLES

Keep pruning to a minimum except for occasional thinning in late winter or after flowering. Avoid heavy cuts of one inch or more since they promote water-sprouts (vigorous shoots on the trunk or main branches). Remove suckers from the base of the tree.

CRABAPPLE FORMS



DISEASES

Four major diseases affect crabapples: cedar- apple rust, powdery mildew, apple scab, and fire blight. The two most common diseases in our area are apple scab and fire blight.

Apple scab (*Venturia inaequalis*)

The spread of this disease is favored by cool, moist spring weather. Fungal spores infect emerging leaves creating brownish-green spots. The leaves discolor and drop early. Fruits become infected too and exhibit sunken black spots surrounded by whitish borders. The disease affects the looks of the tree more than its health. However, repeated infections from year to year decrease a tree's vigor. Purchasing resistant/tolerant cultivars is the best way to have healthy

foliage and to avoid high maintenance fungicide applications.

Fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*)

This serious but less common bacterial disease is impossible to fully eradicate. The bacteria, carried through the air or by pollinating bees, attacks branch and trunk tissue. Infected branches look scorched and shriveled. If the bacteria moves into the trunk the tree will die. Therefore it is necessary to remove all infected branches. Be sure to sterilize pruners with a 10 percent alcohol solution between cuts to prevent the spread of the disease. It is best treated by purchasing resistant cultivars and prompt removal of infected branches.

RECOMMENDED CRABAPPLES FOR NORTHEAST OHIO

Malus	Size ht. x sp.	Form	Bud/Flower	Fruit
'Adirondack'	12' x 6.6'	narrow upright	carmine/white	orange-red
'Bob White'	20' x 30'	dense rounded	pink/white	yellow, P
M. floribunda	12' x 18'	spreading	deep pink/white	yellow to red
'Golden Raindrops'	18' x 13'	upright, vase-shaped	white/white	golden yellow
'Mary Potter'	8' x 18'	low spreading	pink/white	red
'Molten Lava'	12' x 15'	broad weeper	carmine/white	orange-red
'Ormiston Roy'	20' x 25'	broad spreading	rose-red/white	yellow-orange, P
'Prairifire'	20' x 20'	upright rounded	red-purple/red-purple	purple-red
'Red Jade'	12' x 30'	weeper	red/white	bright red
M. sargentii	8' x 15'	low spreading	white/white	reddish-purple
'Sugar Tyme' [®]	18' x 15'	upright oval	pink/white	red, P
'Strawberry Parfait'	18' x 20'	vase-shaped spreading	red/pink	yellow with red blush, P

P - fruits persist until the end of January