

Crabapples are versatile, small, ornamental trees used in the urban landscape. Crabapples bloom in spring, usually in May, bearing flowers that vary a great deal in color, size, fragrance, and visual appeal. It is common for flower buds to be red, opening to pink or white flowers. The fruit ripens between July and November, and varies in size from ¼” to 2” long or wide. Crabapples thrive in full sun and grow best in well drained, slightly acidic soils (pH 5.5-6.5); however, they will grow well in many soil types. Most crabapple selections tolerate the cold winters and hot, dry summers prevalent in the Midwest.

For many years, crabapple cultivars have been selected on the basis of their flowers, but with some cultivars, undesirable features, such as disease problems and early fruit drop, outweigh their short-lived spring beauty. No single cultivar can fulfill every landscaping need. Consider the following information when choosing a crabapple cultivar for your landscape.

DISEASE

Disease resistance should be your first consideration. Many resistant cultivars are available and recommended in order to avoid the most common disease problems. Before making a selection, keep in mind that not all crabapples do well in every location. Disease intensity varies from region to region, and disease strength can vary from year to year. For instance, some crabapples will be more prone to disease susceptibility in areas with greater rainfall than in drier climates. Careful consideration of the following information will be helpful in choosing the right crabapple cultivar. There are four diseases that seriously affect crabapple:

Apple scab is one of the most serious diseases from an aesthetic standpoint, but usually not a serious threat to the health of the tree. It is a fungal disease, which develops in cool, wet springs. On susceptible crabapples, apple scab causes spotting of the leaves, premature defoliation, and unsightly spots on the fruit. There are numerous cultivars that are resistant or very tolerant (still susceptible but with little defoliation) so choose one based on its resistance.

Cedara-apple rust is a less serious leaf-spotting disease common to our native crabapple cultivars. It is usually a problem in areas where native junipers (*Juniperus*) are planted. Selecting resistant cultivars can control this disease.

Powdery mildew is a fungal disease that can cause considerable damage to leaves and fruit of susceptible cultivars without threatening the health of the tree. Poor air circulation, close association with susceptible apple cultivars, and wet, humid weather conditions will greatly influence disease incidence and severity.

Fire blight is a serious bacterial disease of crabapples. Though it is less common than the others, if left untreated it can be fatal to susceptible crabapple cultivars. Select resistant cultivars.

PRUNING CRABAPPLES

Light pruning may be necessary to keep plants healthy, improve form, and correct structural problems. Prune in late winter or just after flowering. Remove dead, diseased, or broken branches at any time. Occasional thinning of the crown allows light into the center of the tree, and is done by removing a few smaller branches back to a crotch. Heavy cuts of one-inch or more should be avoided since they induce excessive water-sprout growth that will ultimately fill in the tree center. Suckers from the base of the trunk are problems with many types of crabapples and should be pruned as close to the ground as possible each season. It is important to disinfect pruning tools after each cut since pathogens can be spread by pruning tools. Sterilize using 70% denatured alcohol or 1 part household bleach mixed with 9 parts water.

| Name | Height Width | Form | Bud/Flowers | Fruit | Disease Resistance | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|------|------|--------|
| | | | | | Scab | Fire | Rust | Mildew |
| Brandywine® 'Branzam' | 20/20 | Rounded | Red/Pink | Yellow | F | F | P | F |
| Camelot™ 'Camzam' | 10/8 | Rounded | Dark Red/Whit | Red | E | E | E | E |
| 'Centennial' | 25/20 | Rounded | Pink/White | Red-Yellow | E | E | E | E |
| Centurion® 'Centzam' | 20/15 | Narrow/Up | Dark Pink/Red | Cherry Red* | F | E | E | E |
| Coralburst™ 'Coralcole | 10/10 | Rounded | Coral/Rose | Bronze-yellow | F | E | E | E |
| 'David' | 15/15 | Rounded | Pink/White | Scarlet Red*† | G | G | E | E |
| 'Dolgo' | 40/30 | Up/Spreading | Pink/White | Yellow w/ Re | E | G | E | E |
| 'Donald Wyman | 20/20 | Rounded | Pink/White | Red* | G | E | E | G |
| 'Doubloons' | 12/10 | Up/Spreading | Red/White | Yellow-Gold | F | E | E | E |
| floribunda | 20/25 | Spreading | Carmine/White | Yellow/Red | E | G | G | G |
| Harvest Gold® 'Hargozam' | 20/15 | Upright | Pink/White | Golden Yellow | E | F | E | E |
| hupehensis | 25/25 | Upright/Spread | Pink/White | Yellow/Red | E | P | E | E |
| 'Indian Magic' | 20/15 | Rounded | Rose Pink | Red* | P | F | E | E |
| 'Indian Summer' | 18/20 | Rounded | Rose Red | Red* | F | E | E | E |
| 'Jewelberry' | 8/12 | Shrub | Pink/White | Red† | F | F | E | E |
| 'Liset' | 15/15 | Rounded | Crimson/Red | Dark Red | G | F | E | F |
| 'Louisa' | 15/15 | Weeping | Red/Pink | Yellow | F | E | E | E |
| 'Ludwick' | 6/10 | Weeping | Dark Pink/Pink | Red | E | E | E | E |
| 'Makamik' | 30/40 | Rounded | Dark Red/Red | Purplish-red | E | F | E | P |
| 'Mary Potter' | 8/18 | Shrub | Pink/White | Red | F | F | E | F |
| Molten Lava™ 'Molazam | 12/15 | Broad/Weeping | Rose/White | Orange Red* | E | E | F | E |
| 'Ormiston Roy' | 20/25 | Up/Spreading | Red/White | Orange Yellow | G | F | G | G |
| Pink Princess™ 'Parsi' | 8/12 | Low spreading | Rose Pink | Dark Red | F | F | F | F |
| 'Pink Spires' | 25/12 | Up/Columnar | Pink | Purplish-red | F | P | F | F |
| 'Prairifire' | 20/20 | Up/Rounded | Red/Dark Red | Purplish-red | E | E | E | E |
| 'Professor Sprenger' | 20/20 | Up/Spreading | Pink/White | Orange Red* | E | E | E | E |
| 'Profusion' | 20/20 | Up/Spreading | Red/Rose Pink | Dark Red* | F | F | E | G |
| 'Purple Prince' | 18/18 | Rounded | Red/Rose Red | Maroon | G | G | E | E |
| 'Radiant' | 25/20 | Rounded | Red/Dark Pink | Red/Yellow | P | E | G | F |
| 'Ralph Shay' | 20/20 | Rounded | Pink/White | Red* | F | F | F | E |
| 'Red Barron' | 18/10 | Columnar | Dark Red/Dark Pink | Maroon | F | G | G | G |
| 'Red Jade' | 12/20 | Weeping | Red/White | Red* | P | F | F | F |

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|--|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|------|------|--------|
| | | | | | Scab | Fire | Rust | Mildew |
| ‘Red Jewel’ | 18/12 | Up/Rounded | Pink/White | Cherry Red* | G | P | E | G |
| ‘Red Splendor’ | 20/20 | Up/Rounded | Rose/Pink | Red* | P | F | G | F |
| ‘Red Swan’ | 10/14 | Weeping | Rose/White | Cherry Red* | G | E | E | E |
| ‘Robinson’ | 25/25 | Up/Spreading | Crimson/Pink | Dark Red* | F | G | G | G |
| ‘Royalty’ | 20/15 | Up/Rounded | Crimson Purple | Red-Purple | P | P | G | F |
| sargentii | 8/15 | Spreading/Shr | Pale Pink/Whit | Red* | E | G | E | E |
| ‘Tina’ | 5/6 | Spreading/Shr | Red/White | Red | E | E | E | E |
| ‘Selkirk’ | 20/25 | Up/Spreading | Rose/Pink | Purplish-red | F | F | F | G |
| ‘Sentinel’ | 18/12 | Up/Columnar | Rose Pink/Whi | Dark Red* | F | F | G | G |
| ‘Sinai Fire’ | 15/15 | Up/Weeping | Red/White | Orange-red | E | E | E | E |
| ‘Snowdrift’ | 20/20 | Rounded | Pink/White | Orange-red* | P | P | G | G |
| ‘Spring Snow’ | 25/22 | Up/Oval | White | Spare fruiting | F | F | G | G |
| ‘Strawberry Parf | 20/25 | Spreading/Vas | Red/Pink | Yellow | E | G | G | E |
| Sugar Tyme™ ‘Sutyram’ | 18/15 | Up/Spreading | Pale Pink/Whit | Red* | E | G | G | G |
| Velvet Pillar™ ‘Velvetcole’ | 20/14 | Up/ Columnar | Pink | Red | P | F | F | F |
| Weeping Candie Apple® ‘Weepcanzam’ | 10/15 | Weeping | Red/Pink | Cherry Red | P | G | E | E |
| White Angel® ‘Inglis’ | 20/20 | UP/Rounded | Pink/White | Red | G | F | F | G |
| White Cascade® ‘Cascole’ | 15/15 | Weeping | Pink/White | Yellow* | G | F | P | G |
| ‘Winter Gold’ | 25/20 | Broadly Oval | Red/White | Yellow | F | P | G | G |
| x zumi | 20/18 | Pyramidal | Pink/White | Red | G | F | G | G |
| x zumi ‘Calocarpa’ | 25/25 | Up/Spreading | Red/White | Bright Red* | E | P | G | G |
| x zumi ‘Wooster’ | 25/25 | Broadly Oval | Coral/White | Orange-red | E | P | G | G |