



HAWTHORN (CRATAEGUS SPP.)

PLANT FACTS

There are **hundreds of species** of hawthorns (*Crataegus*) native across the northern hemisphere, consisting of **both tree and shrub forms**. Hawthorns are in the **ROSACEAE** or rose family and are closely **related to apples, pears and medlars**. They are commonly planted as ornamental and street trees for their durability and attractive flowers and fruit. Size varies among species but the more commonly planted ones grow **13 to 20 feet high**. Hawthorns are distinguished by their lobed and sometimes serrated leaves. Also known as the May-tree, hawthorns typically **bloom in May** with colors ranging from white to crimson red by species. The blossoms have a pungent sweet aroma that attracts many pollinators. In fall, Hawthorns produce small red pome fruits often referred to as **“haws.”** Similar to the crabapple, the flavor is rich and tart but eating quality varies greatly by species. The hawthorn is also known for its extremely **strong wood ideal for wood engravings**. Some folklore says this is the only type of wooden stake that will kill a vampire! Many species of Hawthorn feature **strong sharp thorns**, with shrub making an excellent **privacy hedge**.

SEASONAL CARE

Hawthorns thrive in climate zones 4-8 and are **resilient and easy to grow**. Once established these shrubs are **drought and heat tolerant**, thriving in **shade to full sun**.

WINTER/SPRING: This is when suckers should be removed or transplanted if desired.

Pruning should also be done while trees are dormant.

SUMMER: Pruning can also be done in the summer when the leaves reach their full shape.

Water 2x a week the first summer till the new roots have established.

FALL/EARLY WINTER: Late fall berries ripen and can be harvested throughout the winter.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

The **leaves of the hawthorn are edible** and can be used in salads when they are young and tender. The haws, or berries, ripen late fall and stay on the plant throughout the winter. Better tasting species have fruit that can be eaten raw and have a rich tart taste similar to an overripe apple. Hawthorn berries contain sugars, proteins, carbohydrates and many phytonutrients and are one of the oldest known medicinal plants. They are **linked to heart health with possible benefits including supporting a healthy heartbeat, increasing the heart’s ability to manage stress, and improving heart cell metabolism**. The berries are potent vasodilators that can **assist in lowering blood pressure and hypertension**. As with all new foods hawthorn berries should be eaten in small doses at first. **Those with heart conditions or medications should consult with their physician before consuming.**

PROPAGATING HAWTHORN

Shrub forms and some tree forms are **prone to suckering**, allowing for plant division in the fall/winter. Most commonly plant tree species are grafted.

Plant in sunny location for maximum flower and berry production.

Make sure to water 2x a week in the plants first summer to ensure success.

