



CRABAPPLE (MALUS SPP.)

TREE FACTS

'Crabapple' is a term for any small-fruited apple tree and dozens of species are found across the globe. The Sweet Crabapple (*Malus coronaria*) is native to North America, specifically the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes Region. Crabapples are in the Rose family (*Rosaceae*). Most crabapples planted intentionally are hybrids chosen for ornamental qualities, but their fruit supports many birds and wild animals while also having culinary uses. Crabapples are **small trees reaching 15-20ft** and their bark that is usually a reddish-brown color. They produce sweet-scented 5-petaled flowers that transition from pink to white. Crabapples are **pollinated by many native bees**, including bumblebees and long-tongued bees, as well as some butterflies.

GROWING INFO

Crabapples need **full or partial sunlight** to thrive, prefer a **moist or semi-moist soil**, and tolerate clay in the soil. Crabapples are susceptible to a range of insect pests and diseases, including cedar-apple rust, fireblight, and many moth species. However, their many small fruitlets are more likely to survive damage than their larger cousins. Bloom time is generally March, while fruit reaches maturity during the late summer and fall months.

FALL/WINTER: Once established, 1" of compost may be added in late fall or early spring. Prune during dormancy in late winter, before the tree puts on new growth.

SPRING/SUMMER: Control weed growth around young plant. After tree is established it requires little care. Pest and disease management may be needed for best production.

CULINARY & MEDICINAL INFO

Crabapple fruit tends to be sour and sometimes very small. Some selected cultivars have bigger, tastier fruit and make good cider, sauce, jelly, and desserts. There are also some useful medicinal properties of the fruit and the bark of the plant. The pulp of the fruit (crushed) has **anti-inflammatory properties** and can help heal small cuts. The fruit also has laxative properties due to **high amounts of fiber** and so is used to help relieve some digestive issues. Another traditional medicinal use is to infuse the bark in a liquid which can be drunk to reduce high fevers. Crabapples are also a good source of **Vitamin C**.

PROPAGATION

Cultivars are propagated by grafting cuttings onto new rootstock in late winter. To propagate wild species by seed, plant a fruit as soon as it ripens in the early fall and it should then germinate sometime in the late winter. If sowing from a seed, the seed should be stored at 33F for 3 months before planting. This seed could then take up to 12 months to germinate. Keep the seedlings in pots until they are large enough to put in the ground.

HOW TO ENJOY: SPICED CRABAPPLE BUTTER

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| 4 - 1/4 cup chopped crabapples | 1. Place all ingredients in a saucepan except the |
| 1 - 3/4 cup water | brown sugar. |
| 1/2 tsp ground cloves | 2. Bring to a boil and simmer for 45 mins. |
| 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg | 3. Beat the apples into a thick pulp and then push |
| 1- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon | the pulp through a vegetable mill or sieve. |
| 1 cup dark brown sugar | 4. Return the pulp to the pan and add in the sugar. |
| | 5. Bring to a boil and stir until the butter is very |
| | thick. |
| | 6. Place in a jar and serve when cooled. |

