



Crabapple



Crabapples from Penn Park

Native region: North America, Europe, and Asia

Growing Zones: 4-8

Mature Size: Generally 15-20', but can graft to dwarfing rootstock

Pruning Tree Form: Central Leader. Pruning is helpful during establishment, but minimal pruning is needed once mature.

Pollination Requirements: Depends on variety, but generally two different cultivars required for heavier fruit set

Light Requirements: Full Sun or Partial Sun

Harvest Window: Sep or Oct depending on variety

Maintenance Level: Moderate

Common Pest and Disease Issues: Fire Blight, Plum Curculio, Aphids, Apple Cedar Rust, Apple Scab, Powdery Mildew

Latin Name: *Malus spp.* (multiple species, often hybridized)

Recommended Cultivars (for fruit size/quality): Dolgo, Chestnut, Wickson, Centennial, Hewes Virginia, Whitney, etc.

Crabapples are known for their attractive growth habit, spring flowers, decorative fruits, and mottled bark. The fruits are much smaller and usually more tart than the common apple (*Malus domestica*) but are suitable for jellies, preserves, and cider. They are compatible with most apple varieties for pollination purposes.

Tree Care and Harvest



WATERING: Water twice a week for the first month, and once a week until dormant for the remainder of the year after planting. Aim for 7-10 gallons of water per week, per tree.



WINTER: Annual [winter pruning](#) can help maintain a sturdy structure and manage diseases. Minimal pruning is needed after structure is established.



SPRING: For best health and production, support tree with biweekly feedings (spray or root drench) of compost tea or EM-1. Pick up all dropped fruits.



SUMMER: Monitor trees weekly for pest and disease challenges, especially in humid or wet climates. Pick up all dropped fruits. Prune out fire blight 12+'' below any signs of it. Keep a 3' ring around the tree weeded and mulched.



FALL: Apply compost or compost tea in late fall. Prune out fire blight. Pick up dropped fruits.



HARVEST: Crabapples usually ripen between September and October. Crabapples are ripe when fruit color has intensified and can be easily removed from the branch. If the apples are out of reach try spreading a tarp and shaking the tree. Store crabapples in sealed container in refrigerator or freezer. Storage life is days to weeks depending on variety.