



CRAPEMYRTLE

These beautiful natives of China and Korea are now synonymous with the American South. Deciduous summer flowering crapemyrtles are some of the most versatile ornamentals, and make excellent landscape or street trees.

SELECTION: Look at the area where you wish to install a crapemyrtle, and determine what size plant is needed. Don't select a plant with a mature height of 25 feet for a space that can only accommodate 10 feet. Consider the available sunlight—crapemyrtles prefer at least 5 to 6 hours of direct sun in order to flower well. Also, make sure you have well-draining soil. Finally, crapemyrtles come in a variety of flower colors, with varying bloom times and duration, and with or without fall color or exfoliating bark, so keep these variables in mind, too.



IRRIGATION: Crapemyrtles are drought tolerant once established; however, regular watering is needed the first year or so after planting. If planted in an area with an irrigation system, be sure it only runs in the early morning hours in order to minimize the time moisture can sit on the leaves.

PRUNING: Crapemyrtles do not require pruning in order to grow or bloom well. In fact, severely cutting trees (crape "murder") can encourage problems such as aphids, powdery mildew, breakage, and decay. Severe cutting can also stunt trees and delay blooming, as well as affect cold hardiness. Young trees may benefit from shaping or limbing-up, while mature trees only need pruning to remove suckers (if a tree form is wanted) and crossing branches. The seed heads can be removed at any time, but probably do not affect the overall vigor of the tree.

FERTILIZING: Crapemyrtles generally do not require a lot of fertilizer. Too much can lead to fast-growing, succulent growth, with few or no flowers, making them quite susceptible to aphids and powdery mildew, as well as being prone to breakage. If your crapemyrtles are growing or blooming poorly, you may want to get a soil analysis to see what your nutrient needs are, then correct for deficiencies with recommended fertilizers.

PESTS & DISEASES: Generally, crapemyrtles are free of serious problems, but some varieties are more susceptible than others. Powdery mildew is a fungal disease that affects leaves and flower buds in warm humid weather. It appears as a powdery growth on the tops, or in some cases the undersides, of leaves and flower buds, and can be rubbed off with your fingers. Powdery mildew is unsightly, and may cause disfiguring of leaves and flowers. Planting resistant cultivars is the best way to prevent this disease, although with the right conditions, even resistant plants may be infected. Soapy water or a baking soda and water solution may control a mild case; use a fungicide to treat a severe infection.

Aphids and Japanese beetles are the biggest insect problems for crapemyrtles. Aphids are tiny, pear-shaped, usually green insects that suck the chlorophyll from leaves and flower buds. Typical symptoms are blotches of lighter green or yellow on the leaf surfaces and sooty mold on the trunk and lower leaves. Sooty mold is a fungus that grows on aphid excretion (honeydew), compromising the plants ability to photosynthesize. Aphids can be washed off with a heavy spray from a hose, or you can let natural predators such as lady bug beetles take care of them. In severe cases, an insecticide may be necessary.

Japanese beetles are small metallic green insects that feed on the leaves and flowers of a variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers. They begin feeding in mid-to-late June, and continue through the end of July, with peak times generally around July 4th. There are several options for controlling Japanese beetles. Beetle traps should be set at least 20' away from the plants you are trying to protect. Insects can also be picked off and tossed into a cup/container of soapy water. Insecticides may be necessary.

POPULAR VARIETIES:

<i>Variety</i>	<i>Flower color</i>	<i>Mature height</i>	<i>Shape</i>
Acoma	white	10'	spreading
Apalachee	light lavender	12-15'	upright
Arapaho	red	20'	upright, spreading
Baton Rouge	deep red	2-3'	mini-weeping
Biloxi	pale pink	20'	upright vase
Bourbon Street	watermelon red	2-3'	mini-weeping
Burgundy Cotton	white	10'	upright
Carolina Beauty	dark red	20'+	very upright
Catawba	violet purple	15'	upright
Centennial Spirit	wine red	10-15'	upright
Cherry Dazzle	cherry red	2-4'	miniature
Chickasaw	pink lavender	18-24"	mound
Choctaw	bright pink	15-20'	small tree
Cordon Bleu	lavender	2-3'	mini-weeping
Dazzle Me Pink	medium pink	2-4'	miniature
Delta Blush	pink	18-24'	mini-mound
Dwarf Snow	white	4-6'	shrub
Dynamite	cherry red	20'+	upright
Fantasy	white	20'+	broad tall tree, red bark
Hopi	medium pink	8-10'	compact
Lipar	medium lavender	15-20'	upright, round
Miami	dark pink	20'+	upright
Muskogee	light lavender	25'	broad tall tree
Natchez	white	20-25'	broad tall tree
New Orleans	lavender pink	3'	mini-weeping
Osage	clear pink	15-20'	upright
Pink Velour	bright pink	10'	broad
Pocomoke	dark pink	18-24"	mound
Potomac	clear pink	15-20'	upright
Prairie Lace	pink and white	5-10'	compact, upright
Raspberry Dazzle	bright red/pink	2-4'	miniature
Raspberry Sunday	cardinal red to pink	15-20'	upright
Red Rocket	cherry red	20'	upright
Royalty	deep lavender	10-15'	
Ruby Dazzle	ruby-red	2-4'	miniature
Sacramento	deep red	18-24"	miniature
Sarah's Favorite	white	20'+	upright, broad
Sioux	vibrant dark pink	15'	dense upright
Siren	bright red	10-12'	upright
Snow Dazzle	white	2-4'	miniature
Tightwad	red	2-4'	dense
Tonto	red	10-12'	compact globosa
Townhouse	white	20'+	broad tall tree, red bark
Tuscarora	deep coral pink	15'	broad vase
Twilight	purple	15-20'	broad upright
Victor Red	dark red	5'	upright dwarf
White Chocolate	white	8-10'	upright
World's Fair	deep red	3'	mini-weeping
Zuni	medium lavender	8-12'	globosa

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