

Crataegus aestivalis: May Hawthorn¹

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Introduction

This slow-growing native North American tree reaches a height of 30 feet with a rounded canopy that spreads to 35 feet or more. The dark green, deciduous leaves are often three-lobed and have red/brown undersides. The leaves display no appreciable fall color. The sparkling white, showy springtime flowers appear before the new leaves unfurl and are followed by the production of large, red-dotted fruits. The spreading, low branching habit of growth makes this best suited for planting in a large open area of turf. If regular pruning can be provided to keep low, drooping branches pruned, it can be located closer to a walk.

General Information

Scientific name: *Crataegus aestivalis*

Pronunciation: kruh-TEE-gus ess-tih-VAY-liss

Common name(s): May Hawthorn, Apple Hawthorn

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6A through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: reclamation; screen; highway median; specimen

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 35 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: vase, spreading

Crown density: dense

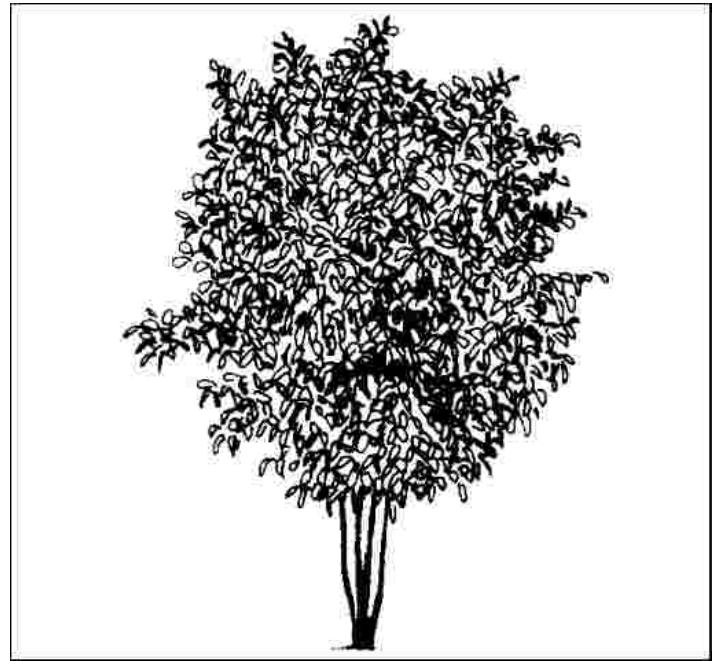


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Crataegus aestivalis*: May Hawthorn

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: crenate, serrate

Leaf shape: obovate, elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches

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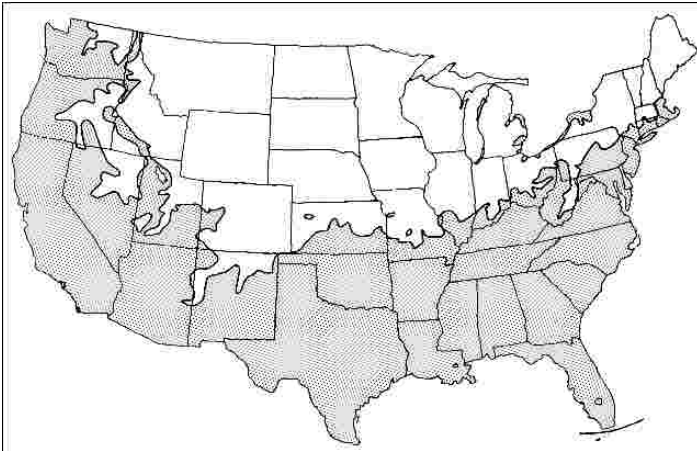


Figure 2. Range

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy;
fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thin, medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline;
well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

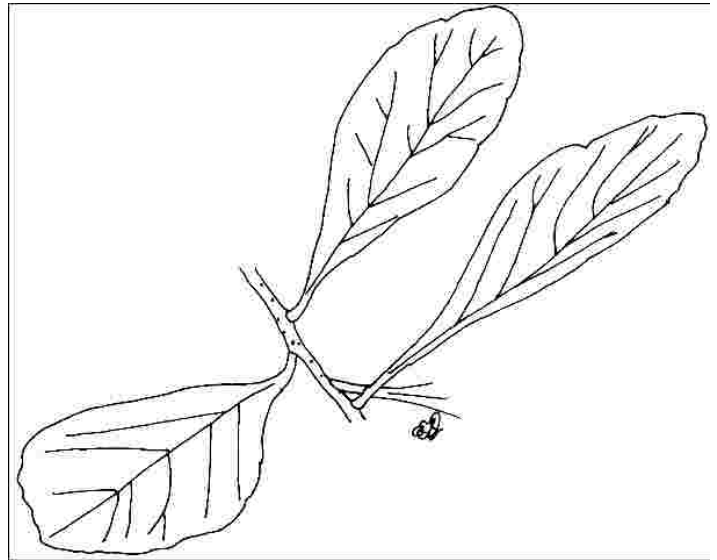


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

May Hawthorn should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, moist soils. According to Dr. J. C. Raulston at North Carolina State University, this may be one of the best Hawthorns for the south due to superior disease resistance.