**Crataegus aestivalis: May Hawthorn**

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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.

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**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

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

**Figure 2. Range**
**Description**

- **Height:** 20 to 30 feet
- **Spread:** 35 to 40 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical
- **Crown shape:** vase, spreading
- **Crown density:** dense
- **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
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** no color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

![Figure 3. Foliage](image)

**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

**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.