



## *Malus floribunda* Japanese Flowering Crabapple<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

This is one of the best Crabapples for form and flower, reaching 15 to 25 feet in height and creating a broad, rounded, densely-branched canopy (Fig. 1). It is also disease resistant, an important attribute for crabapples. The profusion of fragrant, 1 to 1.5-inch-diameter blooms begin as beautiful deep pink to red buds, eventually fading to a glistening white as they open. From August to October, the yellow and red fruits appear, providing a popular food for wildlife or they can be harvested to make a delicious jelly. They can create a litter problem on hard surface beneath the canopy.

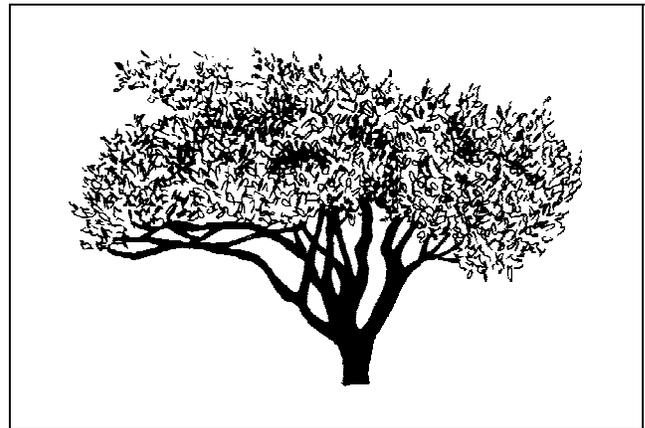


Figure 1. Mature Japanese Flowering Crabapple.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Malus floribunda*  
**Pronunciation:** MAY-lus flor-ih-BUN-duh  
**Common name(s):** Japanese Flowering Crabapple  
**Family:** *Rosaceae*  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 7 (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; espalier; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; trainable as a standard; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance  
**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 15 to 25 feet  
**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette  
**Crown shape:** round; spreading  
**Crown density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** medium  
**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** serrate; serrulate  
**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval)  
**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-399, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** pink; white

**Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; very showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** < .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red; yellow

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several

trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** medium; thin

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

**Soil salt tolerance:** moderate

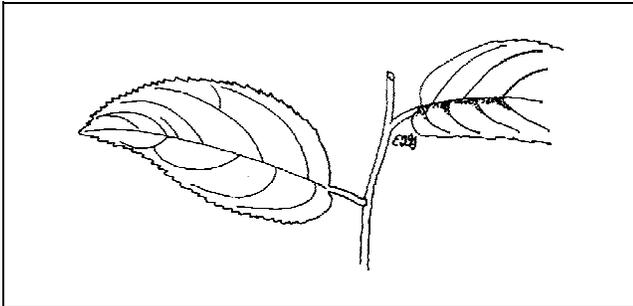
### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Japanese Flowering Crabapple.

**Ozone sensitivity:** sensitive or moderately tolerant

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

Japanese Flowering Crabapple requires very little pruning but any that is needed should be completed before late spring, to ensure dormant flower buds are not removed. Trees used as street trees should be trained to develop a central trunk and should be occasionally thinned to eliminate water sprouts or crossed-branches, and to open up the crown. This allows for better air circulation through the crown and helps reduce disease.

Crabapples are also useful as median trees where the fruit will fall away from pedestrians. Placed in the lawn area as an accent so they receive occasional irrigation, Crabapple will give you years of wonderful flowers and showy fruit. It is best to locate them away from a patio or other hard surface so the fruits will not fall and cause a mess. Set it back just far enough so the crown will not overhang the walk, but close enough so the flowers and fruit can be enjoyed.

Japanese Flowering Crabapple grows in moist, well-drained, acid soil in full sun locations for best flowering. They are not recommended for sandy soil due to their inability to tolerate drought, but any other soil is suitable, including clay. Crabapples grow well in the Texas panhandle but are not extremely drought tolerant and are not well suited for high pH soil.

Contact the Ornamental Crabapple Society, Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois 60532 for more information on Crabapples.

### Pests

Aphids infest branch tips and suck plant juices.

Fall webworm makes nests on the branches and feeds inside the nest. Small nests can be pruned out or sprayed with *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

Scales of various types are usually controlled with horticultural oil.

Mites are too small to see easily so can cause much foliage discoloration before being detected. Mites are usually controlled with horticultural oil.

Tent caterpillar builds tents or nests in trees in early summer or late spring. Feeding occurs outside the nest. Small nests are pruned out or simply pulled from the tree and caterpillars destroyed. Do not burn nests while they are still in the tree since this injures the tree and could start an uncontrolled fire.

### Diseases

Although disease resistant, trees are slightly susceptible to scab and powdery mildew and have some susceptibility to fireblight.

Scab infection takes place early in the season and dark olive green spots appear on the leaves. In late summer the infected leaves fall off when they turn yellow. Infected fruits have black, slightly raised spots.

Fire blight susceptible trees have blighted branch tips. Leaves on infected branch tips turn brown or black, droop, and hang on the branches. The leaves look scorched as by a fire. The trunk and main branches become infected when the bacteria are washed down the branches. Cankers form and are separated from adjacent healthy bark by a crack. The infected bark may be shredded.

Powdery mildew is a fungus which coats leaves with mycelia resembling white powder.

Rust causes brown to rusty-orange spots on the leaves. Badly spotted leaves fall prematurely. Redcedars are the alternate host.

Crabapples are subject to several canker diseases. Prune out infected branches, avoid unnecessary wounding, and keep trees healthy.