

Malus sargentii Sargent Crabapple¹

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INTRODUCTION

Sargent Crabapple is a dwarf, deciduous tree, forming a dense, wide-spreading, irregularly-rounded silhouette, six to eight feet high by 8 to 10 feet wide (Fig. 1). The small, fragrant, springtime blossoms start out as red or pink buds but open to sparkling white flowers. The small, dark red, persistent fruits which follow are extremely popular with birds and other wildlife. They can create a litter problem beneath the canopy as the fruit droops in fall and winter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Malus sargentii*

Pronunciation: MAY-lus sar-JEN-tee-eye

Common name(s): Sargent Crabapple

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 8A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; espalier; screen; trainable as a standard; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 6 to 12 feet

Spread: 8 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round; spreading; vase shape

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

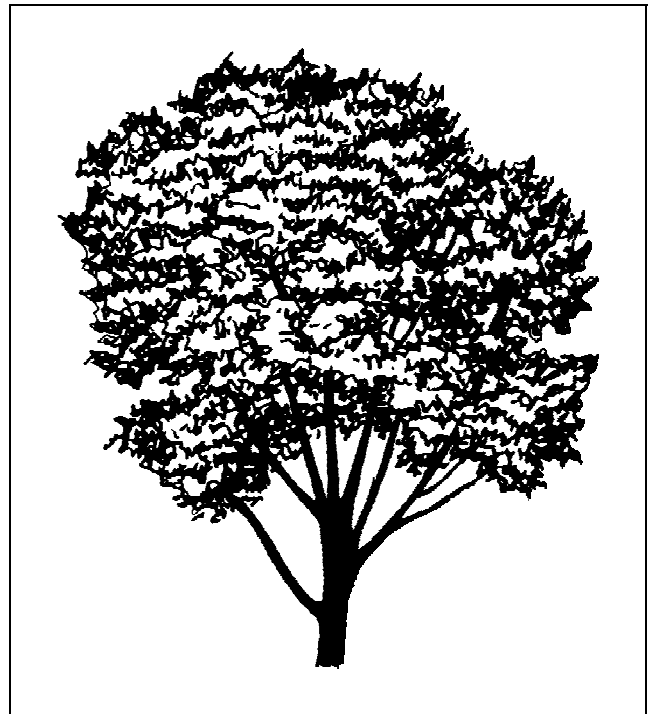


Figure 1. Middle-aged Sargent Crabapple.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: orange; yellow

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-401, 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 characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; 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; showy 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: no special winter interest

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

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

Ozone sensitivity: sensitive or moderately tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

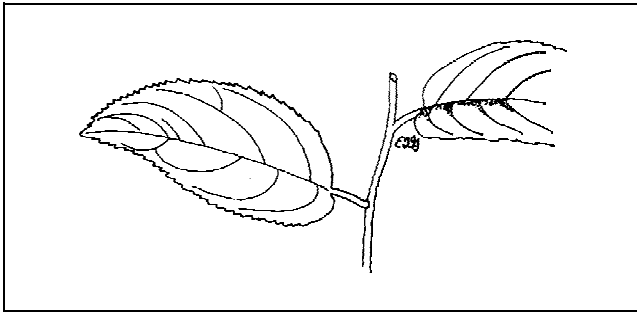


Figure 3. Foliage of Sargent Crabapple.

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

This dense, compact spreading shrub or small tree makes an outstanding specimen around a residential or commercial landscape. Select a single-trunked tree for street and parking lot locations. It looks great growing out of a low groundcover, located in a bed with low-growing shrubs, or placed toward the rear of a shrub border. A row would make a nice screen during the summer months.

Sargent Crabapple grows in moist, well-drained, acid soil in full sun locations for best flowering and disease resistance. They are not recommended for sandy soil due to their inability to tolerate drought, but any other soil is suitable, including clay. Unlike many other Crabapples, Sargent Crabapple is only slightly susceptible to scab, fireblight, and leaf spot. This makes it one of the best for the South. 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 crushed. Spray with *Bacillus thuringiensis*. Do not burn nests while they are still in the tree since this injures the tree and could start an uncontrolled fire.

Diseases

Sargent Crabapple shows good disease-resistance.

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 with black, spots. Infected fruits have black, slightly raised spots. Use resistant varieties.

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. Use resistant cultivars when available.

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.