



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 (Fig. 1). 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: 6 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; screen; specimen

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

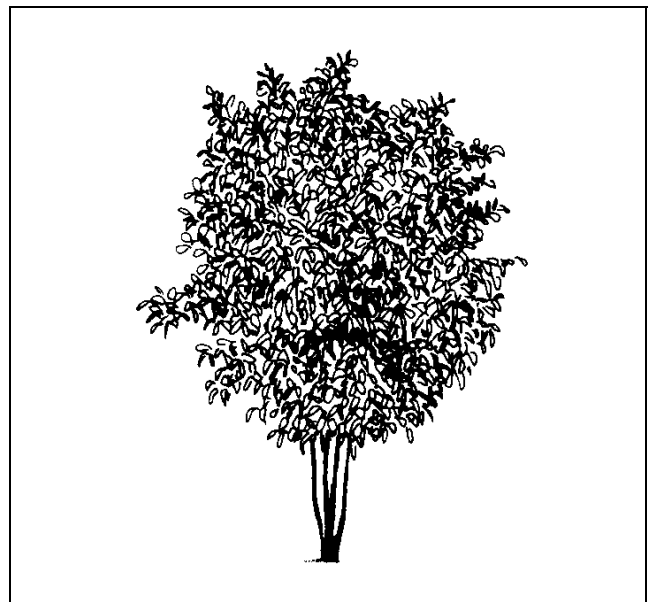


Figure 1. Middle-aged May Hawthorn.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 35 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: spreading; vase shape

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: crenate; serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

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

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter

problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: poor

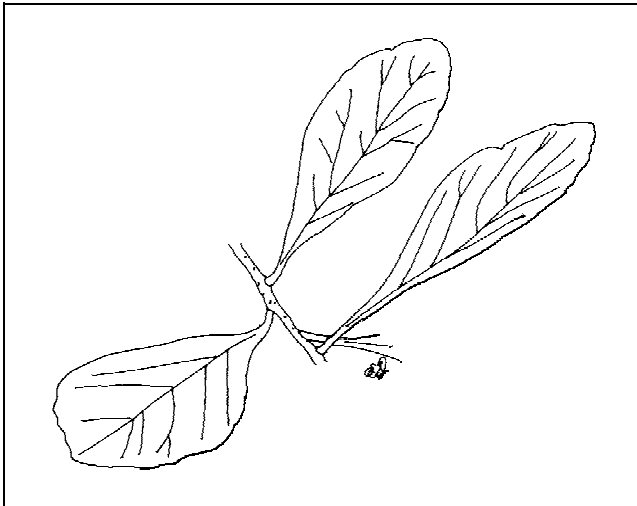


Figure 3. Foliage of May Hawthorn.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

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

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

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

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.