

## COCKSPUR HAWTHORN

*Crataegus crus-galli* L.  
Plant Symbol = CRCR2

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center



Native Trees of Texas  
Department of Horticulture  
Texas A&M University

### Uses

**Erosion Control:** Because it tolerates a wide variety of sites, it can be planted to stabilize banks, for shelterbelts, and for erosion control.

**Wildlife:** It provides excellent cover and nesting sites for many smaller birds. The small fruits are eaten by many birds especially cedar waxwings, fox sparrows, and ruffed grouse; rodents and other smaller birds. White tailed deer and mule deer browse the young twigs and leaves.

**Beautification:** Excellent in group plantings, deciduous screens, groupings, tall barrier hedge, and seasonal accent tree.

### Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values.

### Description

**General:** It is a small tree that grows twenty to thirty feet high, twenty to thirty-five feet wide; with wide-spreading, horizontal, thorny branches. Leaves are broadest above or near the middle, thick, leathery, shiny dark green above, usually not lobed, and smooth. Flowers ranging from white to red are produced in clusters. Fruits are broadest above the middle or rounded, dull red or green.

**Distribution:** Cockspur hawthorn grows from southern Quebec, and Ontario to northern Louisiana, Alabama and northwestern Georgia, and west to Kansas.

### Adaptation

Although Cockspur hawthorn generally requires no special soil requirements, it prefers a moist, well-drained, slightly acid soils, and full sunlight. It is adaptable to poor soils; various soil pHs, compacted soils, drought, heat and winter salt spray. Adapted to USDA Hardiness Zone 4.

### Establishment

**Propagation from Seed or Grafting:** Cockspur hawthorn can be propagated by seeds or by stem cuttings grafted onto seedling rootstock. Propagation using seeds requires acid scarification for two to three hours followed by three months warm stratification and another three months prechilling. Seeds are planted in drill rows eight to twelve inches apart and covered with 1/4 inch of soil.

Containerized trees should be planted when they are no more than eight feet tall, in the fall or spring.

Grafts are budded on seedling understock in August and September.

### Management

Seedlings develop taproot, thus should not be kept in seedbeds longer than one year. Balled and burlapped trees should be planted in early spring. If transplanted in autumn, amend soil, fertilize, water thoroughly, mulch adequately and avoid winter salt

spray. Pruning should be done in the winter or early spring in order to maintain a clear shoot leader on young trees and/or remove the weakest branches to allow more light to pass through. Suckers or stems arising from the roots should be removed when they become noticeable.

### **Pest and Potential Problems**

Cedar hawthorn rust affects the fruit, foliage and stems. Potential pests include leaf blotch minor.

### **Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**

Consult your local nurseries to choose the right cultivar for your specific landscape. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

### **References**

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