

Crape Myrtle

Few plants put on a greater summer show, and for a greater period of time than the crape myrtle. Long considered a southern plant, cold-hardy crape myrtles are making their presence known in South Central Pennsylvania. They grow slowly in the cool spring when other plants are racing ahead. But when the heat of summer begins, and other species are losing their luster, crape myrtles begin to produce flower buds. Vibrant, showy flowers in a range of colors, bloom mid-summer into early autumn. Interesting seed heads, and bright fall colors follow blooming, along with subtle to stunning multicolored bark, and unique winter architecture, make this plant exceed most landscape choices for four-season interest and appeal.

Crape myrtles will survive in almost any soil and sunny location. However, because they flower on new growth, the better the soil, the more they grow and flower. The best time to plant crape myrtle is June to late September while soils are warm. Watering during summer hot and dry spells is also beneficial to flowering, but overall crape myrtle is very drought tolerant once established in the landscape.

Planting Instructions

For success with crape myrtle dig a hole slightly shallower than the depth and two to three times wider than the width of the plant rootball. Remove the plant from the container and loosen the rootball by vigorously pulling the roots to free them from the mass. Place the plant in the hole with the rootflare slightly above ground level. (Avoid planting too deep!) Spread **PlantSure Plus** around the rootball and backfill the hole with native soil amended with 1/3 plant mix. **Bio-tone Starter Plus** can also be substituted for **PlantSure** and added to the amended soil mix. Both products contain beneficial mycorrhizae which improve soil structure and promote deeper, faster root growth. Spread a 2-3" layer of mulch over the planting area being sure to keep mulch away from the trunk or stems of the plant and water thoroughly.

Care Instructions

Newly planted crape myrtle will require a slow deep soaking 1-2 times a week in the absence of rainfall, for the first two months after planting, and once a week until late fall.

To ensure success with newly planted crape myrtle, we recommend for the first two seasons to follow this protocol in early April while the plant is still dormant:

- Remove seedheads and crossing branches.
- Move mulch 12"-18' away from the trunk or stems, and apply Holly-Tone following the recommended rate on the package. Re-spread the mulch to cover the fertilizer.
- To stimulate root activity, apply a Miracle-Gro solution at a rate of 4 scoops per 1 gallon of water. The amount you apply will vary from a 1/2 gallon to 2 gallons, depending on the size of the plant. Apply 3 times at 7 day intervals.

Pruning may be necessary where a plant over-grows a site, but severely pruning to the ground each season is unnecessary. During severe winters there may be some dieback to younger plants that can be pruned back in spring, but this will lessen with age. With new cultivars and a range of height and growth habits, there are now crape myrtles' to fit any sunny landscape location.

Crape Myrtle

These are varieties that will grow in South Central Pennsylvania.

Dwarf Shrubs

	Height	Flower Color	Bark Color	Fall Color	Growth Habit
Chicksaw	2 - 3 ft.	light pinkish lavender	light gray	bronze-red	compact shrub
Pocomoke	1 - 2 ft.	deep rose pink	light gray	bronze red	compact shrub
Red Filli	12" to 18"	red		purple-maroon	low spreading
Tightwad	2 - 3 ft.	dark red	tan	yellow-orange	compact shrub
Violet Filli	12" to 18"	violet		purple-maroon	low spreading

Semi-Dwarf Shrubs

	Height	Flower Color	Bark Color	Fall Color	Growth Habit
Acoma	5 - 10 ft.	white	light gray	red-purple	semi-pendulous
Center Punch	4 - 5 ft.	bright red	gray-brown	dull red	compact shrub
Cherry Dazzle	3 - 4 ft.	cherry red	nearly white	orange-russet	compact shrub
Hopi	5 - 10 ft.	clear light pink	gray-brown	orange-red	dense rounded shrub
Pecos	6 - 10 ft.	clear medium pink	dark brown	maroon	dense rounded shrub
Raspberry Dazzle	4 - 5 ft.	raspberry red	tan	orange	compact upright
Tonto	5 - 10 ft.	fuchsia	gray-brown	maroon	dense rounded shrub
Velma's Royal Delight	4 - 6 ft.	purple magenta	light gray	orange-red	compact shrub
Victor	4 - 5 ft.	dark red	light gray-tan	yellow-orange	compact upright
Zuni	5 - 10 ft.	medium lavender	gray-brown	orange-red	dense rounded shrub

Large Shrub to Small Tree

	Height	Flower Color	Bark Color	Fall Color	Growth Habit
Dynamite	10 - 12 ft.	cherry red	gray-brown	crimson	upright rounded
Pink Velour	10 - 12 ft.	bright pink	light gray	yellow-orange	broad upright
Raspberry Sunday	12 - 15 ft.	pinkish-red with white	gray-brown	maroon	upright to columnar
Sioux	12 - 16 ft.	dark pink	gray-brown	red-purple	upright
Yuma	15 - 18 ft.	lavender-purple	light gray	yellow-orange	broad upright

Large Tree

	Height	Flower Color	Bark Color	Fall Color	Growth Habit
Catawba	15 - 20 ft.	violet purple	light gray-brown	red-orange	dense upright
Muskogee	15 - 20 ft.	light lavender	light gray-brown	red-orange	broad upright
Natchez	15 - 20 ft.	pure white	cinnamon brown	yellow-orange to red	tall upright
Red Rocket	15 - 20 ft.	cherry red	gray-brown	red-orange	upright
Tuscarora	15 - 20 ft.	dark coral pink	mottled light brown	red-orange	upright vase shaped
Tuskegee	15 - 20 ft.	dark pink to near red	mottled light gray-tan	red-orange	broad upright