

# Siberian Crabapple



# Siberian Crabapple (*Malus baccata*)

## General Description

Crabapples are a group of small flowering trees used for conservation and landscape plantings. They are valued for their foliage, fruit, flowers, wildlife benefits, and variations in form and size. Many varieties of conservation crabapples are hybrids of this species. Flowers and fruit are of particular interest. Siberian crabapple is the hardiest species of the *Malus* genus and produces white flowers. The largest tree in North Dakota is 32 feet tall with a canopy spread of 40 feet.

### Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Reddish-brown, with several imbricate scales.

Bud Size - 1/8 to 1/4 inch long.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, elliptical.

Leaf Margins - Finely-serrate to irregularly-toothed or lobed.

Leaf Surface - Essentially glabrous.

Leaf Length - 1 to 3/4 inches.

Leaf Width - 1 to 2 1/2 inches.

Leaf Color - Dark or olive-green above, paler green beneath; yellow fall color.

### Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Umbel or corymb-like racemes.

Flower Color - White.

Fruit Type - A 1/4 to 1/3 inch (pea-sized) pome with deciduous calyx.

Fruit Color - Yellow, often with reddish blush.

### Form

Growth Habit - Range from round to spreading types.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; medium, winter.

Crown Height - 15 to 25 feet.

Crown Width - 15 to 25 feet.

Bark Color - Gray-brown to reddish-brown.

Root System - Spreading.

## Environmental Requirements

### Soils

Soil Texture - Adapted to a variety of soils, prefer a heavy loam soil.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 7.5, prefers slightly acidic soils..

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G.

### Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 2.

### Water

Need well-drained, moist soils.

### Light

Full sun.

## Uses

### Conservation/Windbreaks

Small tree for farmstead windbreaks, riparian plantings, and highway beautification.

### Wildlife

Crabapples provide fair cover and high quality fruit and browse for many birds and mammals. Rodents and rabbits can destroy trees by girdling them.

### Agroforestry Products

Wood - Desirable for smokehouse kindling and firewood.

Food - Used fresh and processed.

Medicinal - Used for dysentery and diarrhea. Source of phloretin, an antibiotic.

### Urban/Recreational

Used for ornamental landscaping, specimen, shade tree, and screens.

## Cultivated Varieties

Several cultivated varieties for ornamental and conservation uses.

Columnar Siberian Crabapple (*Malus baccata* 'Columnaris') - Narrow, upright tree, highly fireblight susceptible.

Manchurian Crabapple (*Malus baccata* var. *mandshurica*)

Midwest Crabapple (*M. baccata* var. *mandshurica* 'Midwest') - Released by USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota. A cultivar seed strain.

## Related Species

Dolgo Crabapple (*Malus* x 'Dolgo') - Introduced by South Dakota State University in 1917. White flowers, 1-inch oval, red fruits. Very hardy rootstock or interstock.

## Pests

Common diseases include fireblight, cedar-apple rust, apple scab, and botryosphaeria canker. Common insect pests include cankerworm and apple maggot. Rabbits, rodents, and deer commonly feed on crabapples.

Crabapples should be protected from girdling or browsing by mammals and should not be planted in the same site as juniper or red-cedar. Extracts of fruit have been used as an attractant to trap insect pests.