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# Disease-Resistant Crabapples

Crabapples are a mainstay of our landscape palette in New England. Their beautiful bloom, small stature, and attractive fruit give them year-round interest...unless they are devastated by disease! Crabapples are susceptible to four major diseases which can cause early defoliation, disfigurement and weakening of trees.

Apple scab is the most common and most serious of the diseases. It shows up on leaves as olive green spots with a velvety, grayish surface. In July leaves often turn yellow or orange and drop from the tree. Another serious disease, fire blight, causes the leaves to blacken, shrivel and hang down. Cedar apple rust shows up as conspicuous bright yellow to orange spots on the upper leaf surfaces. And powdery mildew appears in mid-summer as patches of grayish white powder on leaves and fruit.

You probably don't want plants that have to be sprayed in order to be attractive! Many of the older varieties may look great in flower but then succumb to scab or other disease in mid-summer, looking tattered and torn for the remainder of the season.

Some cultivars and hybrids that are readily available and have shown good resistance in many trials nationwide are listed below. All have single flowers and small fruit (less than 5/8" diameter). The temperatures at the end of each description are cold hardiness ratings from the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

**Adams:** A rounded, dense tree with clusters of purplish red buds and deep pink flowers. The red fruit stays on trees through late autumn. -35°F.

**Adirondack:** A columnar upright form with red buds and large white flowers, persistent red to orange fruit. -30°F.

**Donald Wyman:** A 20' tree rounded in habit and highly resistant to apple scab. It has pink buds, white flowers and abundant, glossy red fruits which hold on late into winter. -35°F.

**Harvest Gold:** An upright vase-shaped tree with gold fruit remaining into early winter. Flowers are white and bloom later than many crabapples. -30°F.

**Japanese crabapple (*Malus floribunda*):** A broad, rounded tree with dense branches. Flowers are pink to white in color and very fragrant. Buds are red and the yellow fruit are attractive to birds. Dates back to 1862 as an introduction from Japan.

**Louisa:** Umbrella-shaped, weeping habit; rose-colored buds and true pink flowers; fruit small, yellow to amber. -25°F.

**Prariefire:** New growth on this rounded tree emerges purple-red in color, eventually turning to reddish green. Flowers are a rich red and the persistent fruit a deep purple-red. -35°F.

**Professor Sprenger:** A tree with abundant pink buds and showy white flowers. The orange-red fruits last until Christmas. -30°F.

**Purple Prince:** Red buds and dark purplish flowers on a 15' rounded tree with attractive cherry-like bark. Many people are looking for a purple-leaved crabapple and this is probably the best one. -30°F.

**Sargentii:** A low, spreading species only 6-8' high but twice as wide. Reddish-pink buds open into white, single flowers followed by bright red fruit relished by wildlife. -25°F.

**Sugar Tyme:** Pale pink buds, fragrant white flowers. The tree reaches 18 feet in height and has abundant long-lasting deep red fruit. -30°F.

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**2005**

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