



Bulletin

Extension

Crabapple Considerations— Aesthetics are Everything

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Introduction

Crabapples are highly prized as a way to add shade, foliage, colorful flowers, and fruit to the landscape. However, there is nothing worse than having to view a summer landscape with a leafless tree denuded by the apple scab fungus. These aesthetic evaluations can be used by nurseries, garden centers, landscape architects, landscapers, and homeowners alike to avoid planting a landscape liability. Total aesthetics includes the overall impact of diseases, insects, fruit, flowers, foliage, tree form, and growth rate of each crabapple selection. All of this information combines to form an accurate depiction of each tree's response to the specific growing conditions of Ohio.

Procedures

All trees were evaluated monthly by collecting data to formulate each crabapple profile. There are a total of forty-two crabapple selections in this study. Twenty-eight selections were planted in 1984 with monthly observations and aesthetic ratings conducted for six years (1993-1999). These characterizations are accurate representations of each crabapples performance.

The remaining fourteen crabapples were planted in 1994 and only three years of monthly observations and aesthetic ratings have been compiled. These crabapples are indicated with a "©"

preceding the crabapple name. The profiles of these "newer" crabapples may not be a complete representation of their aesthetic qualities. More research is needed to confirm these findings or correct inaccuracies.

Observations

This past growing season should have been called "the incredible year of fruit!" Due to excellent weather during bloom the trees were loaded with fruit. In fact, the fruit load was so prolific that many tree forms were altered as branches began to splay and sag from the fruit weight. This fruitful phenomenon provided a great opportunity to observe the maximum effect of a crabapple tree in all of its glory.

The relatively dry spring combined with a dry growing season resulted in minimizing and almost eliminating any symptoms of apple scab for this year.

The more accurate the information is, with regard to each crabapple's performance, the more effective these trees will be for incorporation into diverse uses and designs. Better information should result in a more realistic expectation of how a crabapple will perform or which one will best suit a niche or other specific needs. By using the following table and its accompanying descriptions of each crabapple, it should be easy to select the perfect crabapple for any landscape!

Table 1. Selected observations to assist in choosing crabapples.

Crabapple	Color	Fruit Size	Color	Fruit Tree Form	Scab	Bloom Aesthetic Ave.
☉ ‘Adirondack’	O/R	.25 - .5	W	NU	none	2.5
<i>M. baccata</i> ‘Jackii’	M/R	.4 - .5	W	RO	none	2.8
‘Beverly’	P/R	.5 - .75	W	US	none	3.6
‘Bob White’	G/Y	.4 - .5	W	RO	none	2.8
☉ ‘Camelot’	RO/P	.25 - .4	W	DWS	trace	3.0
☉ ‘Canary’	Y	.25	W	OS	minor	3.0
☉ ‘Candymint’	R/PU	.25 - .4	P	LS	none	2.0
‘David’	SR	.5 - .6	W	RO	none	3.0
‘Dolgo’	R/PU	1.5 - 2	W	BR	none	3.9
‘Donald Wyman’	R	.4 - .5	W	BR	minor	2.5
<i>M. floribunda</i>	Y	.3 - .4	W	RS	trace	3.0
☉ ‘Glen Mills/Winter Gem’	R	.25 - .3	W	RO	major	2.4
☉ ‘Golden Raindrops’	Y	.25 - .3	W	OS	none	2.4
‘Harvest Gold’	Y	.3 - .4	W	BR	major	3.1
‘Indian Magic’	RO	.3 - .45	P	RS	major	2.6
‘Indian Summer’	R	.5 - .6	RO/R	RO	major	3.0
☉ ‘Lancelot’	Y	.25 - .3	W	DWR	none	2.8
‘Liset’	MR	.5	RO/R	OR	trace	3.2
☉ ‘Louisa’	LG	.3 - .4	P	TW	none	1.7
‘Mary Potter’	R	.25 - .4	W	SW	trace	2.2
‘Molten Lava’	R	.25 - .3	W	BS	minor	2.0
‘Naragansett’	CR	.4 - .5	W	US	major	2.9
‘Ormiston Roy’	O	.3 - .4	W	BR	trace	2.5
☉ ‘Pink Satin’	DR	.3 - .4	P	US	minor	3.3
☉ ‘Prairie Maid’	RO/R	.25 - .4	DP	RU	none	2.6
‘Prairifire’	PU/R	.4 - .5	CO/R	RO	none	2.4
‘Prof. Sprenger’	OR	.5 - .6	W	US	trace	3.5
☉ ‘Purple Prince’	B/PU	.4 - .5	RO/R	BR	none	2.6
‘Red Jade’	R	.4 - .5	W	SW	minor	2.3
‘Red Jewel’	CR	.3 - .4	W	UP	none	2.9
‘Red Splendor’	R	.5 - .6	RO/P	US	major	3.1
<i>M. sargentii</i>	R	.25 - .3	W	BS	none	2.7
‘Sentinel’	R	.3 - .4	W	NU	minor	2.8
‘Silver Drift’	CR	.3 - .4	W	RO	trace	2.6
‘Silver Moon’	M/R	.3 - .4	W	OV	none	2.8
☉ ‘Sinai Fire’	RO	.4 - .5	W	HS	none	2.4
‘Snowdrift’	SR	.3 - .4	W	BR	major	2.9
‘Strawberry Parfait’	R	.4 - .5	P	OS	trace	2.5
‘Sugar Tyme’	CR	.4 - .5	W	BR	trace	2.6
‘White Angel’	R	.5 - .6	W	BR	none	3.1
‘White Cascade’	LG	.3 - .4	W	TW	major	2.7
<i>M. zumi</i> ‘Calocarpa’	CR	.25 - .3	W	BR	trace	2.8

Color Key: R-red, P-pink, Y-yellow, O-orange, G-gold, M-maroon, PU-purple, RO-rose, LG-lemon gold, CR-cherry red, DR-dark red, DP-deep pink, CO/R-coral red, SR-salmon red.

Tree Form: RO-rounded, OS-open spreader, US-upright spreader, NU-narrow upright, LS-low spreader, DWR-dwarf rounded, TW-true weeper, SW-spreading weeper, BS-broadly spreading, OV-oval, HS-horizontal spreader

Observations

Crabapple	Aesthetic Rating Average ²	Time of Effective Fruit Display ¹
©‘Adirondack’	2.5	late August to mid-December
<p>{Orange-red fruits, white flowers, narrow upright form}. Positives: tight columnar form; great autumn fruit/foilage combination; fruit ripens to a deep orange-gold; flowers are red-tinged. Negatives: somewhat slow growing; fruit is singular rather than clusters and leafhoppers appear to relish the foliage. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<i>M. baccata</i> ‘Jackii’	2.8	late July to mid-December
<p>{Maroon-red fruits, white flowers, large broad round form}. Positives: large, glossy green leaves (by far the best foliage of any crabapple in the plot); fall contrast of yellow and rust colored leaves against attractive maroon-red fruit is outstanding; frosty temperatures causes bark to take on an orange cast. Negatives: relative sparseness of fruit clusters and mediocre overall winter appearance. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
‘Beverly’	3.6	late July to late September
<p>{Bright pinkish-red fruits, white flowers, large broad spreading form}. Positives: consistent; impressive fruit display from late summer through early fall; profuse pink buds opening to snowy white flowers in spring. Negatives: muddied, rotted fruits turn black beginning mid-fall through winter; fruits partially eaten by birds creating an unsightly mess on the tree; sprawling growth habit is awkward. Diseases: no scab; however, moderate fireblight noted in 1994.</p>		
‘Bob White’	2.8	mid-October to late January
<p>{Gold-yellow fruits, white flowers, rounded form}. Positives: persistent, small, firm fruits maturing mid-winter into striking orange-gold color, an excellent color for winter landscape; exceptional floral display of delicate white blossoms opening from pinkish-red buds; overall one of the better yellow-fruiting selections of the plot. Negatives: fruit/floral display alternates yearly from profuse to sparse; lacks summer appeal. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
©‘Camelot’	3.0	mid-June to late October
<p>{Rose-pink fruits, white flowers, low open spreading form}. Positives: oblong unique colored fruit; petite, lovely fuschia-tinged flower; diminutive size is great for space limited areas; foliage dark green with burgundy overtones. Negatives: very slow growing; dull leaf appearance. Diseases: trace of scab.</p>		
©‘Canary’	3.0	mid-August to early December
<p>{Yellow fruits, white flowers, open spreading form}. Positives: bright yellow tiny fruits hang in clusters to nicely accentuate form; nice autumnal fruit/foilage effect. Negatives: early defoliation from scab; fruit deteriorates rapidly to cider brown and falls off quickly. Diseases: minor scab.</p>		

Crabapple	Aesthetic Rating Average ²	Time of Effective Fruit Display ¹
<p>©‘Candy mint’ 2.0 early July to late December</p> <p>{Purple-red fruits, pink flowers, low spreading form}. Positives: graceful low spreading form; reliable fruit/flower displays; burgundy-tinged leaves; new stems are a deep burgundy; new foliage is striking, shiny wine-red. Negatives: very slow growing; dull summer leaf appearance. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<p>‘David’ 3.0 mid-September to mid-November</p> <p>{Scarlet fruits, white flowers, rounded form}. Positives: abundant snowy-white flower display; impressive cherry like fruits; nice tree form. Negatives: yearly floral/fruit displays alternate from profuse to sparse; large mummies hang from late fall to mid-winter; mediocre summer appeal. Diseases: trace of scab.</p>		
<p>‘Dolgo’ 3.9 early August to mid-September</p> <p>{Red-purple plum-like fruits, snowy-white flowers, large rounded form}. Positives: consistent, early annual bloomer; almost neon red-purple fruits are edible; fruit impressive for a brief period during mid-summer. Negatives: major fruit mess due to fruit drop; overripe fruit smell is intoxicating; lacks ornamental effect for much of the year. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<p>‘Donald Wyman’ 2.5 mid-September to late March</p> <p>{Bright red fruits, white flowers, large broad round form}. Positives: excellent floral display; persistent glossy fruits remain effective turning mud-red after a freeze; attractive exfoliating bark on mature trees. Negatives: tenacious fruit mummies hang into early summer; heavy fruit scab repeatedly reduces overall appeal. Diseases: minor scab on leaves but major scab on fruit.</p>		
<p><i>M. floribunda</i> 3.0 mid-October to early November</p> <p>{Fruit yellow, white flowers, broad spreading form}. Positives: airy floral display of pink-red buds opening to white flowers; great commingling of yellow and cider-brown fruit colors for autumnal effect; feathery effect of pedicels in winter. Negatives: yellow flecking of foliage in summer; very short fruit impact; relatively ordinary appearance for much of the year. Diseases: trace of scab.</p>		
<p>©‘Glenn Mills/Winter Gem’ 2.4 late August to mid-April</p> <p>{Bright red fruits, white flowers, large rounded form}. Positives: dependable annual bloom; petite, firm fruit is sensational; incredibly long lasting fruit effects; fast growing, consistent tree form. Negatives: mediocre summer appeal. Diseases: minor scab mainly on leaves.</p>		
<p>©‘Golden Raindrops’ 2.4 mid-October to early December</p> <p>{Yellow fruits, white flowers, open spreading form}. Positives: petite, lemon yellow fruits; interesting cutleaf, glossy deep-green foliage; reliable fruit/flower display; great autumnal leaf color; contrasting yellow-orange bark. Negatives: bland green fruit throughout the summer. Diseases: no scab.</p>		

Crabapple	Aesthetic Rating Average ²	Time of Effective Fruit Display ¹
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‘Harvest Gold’ 3.1late October to mid-December

{ Yellow fruits, white flowers, upright open form }. **Positives:** attractive butter yellow fruits mature to golden yellow; nice contrast of red pedicels against fruit clusters. **Negatives:** long period of bland green fruit well into mid-fall, leaves hang on for a long time hiding the fruit; awkward, gangly form; extensive fruit scab. **Diseases:** major scab on leaves and fruit; some fireblight problems.

‘Indian Magic’ 2.6 mid-June to early April

{ Orange-red fruits, pink flowers, broad round form }. **Positives:** outstanding fruit display; unbelievable autumnal orange-red fruits with golden yellow underside; emerging foliage a pleasing burgundy; fall foliage an apricot-orange color; unfailing pink floral show. **Negatives:** tenacious fruit mummies; defoliation in mid- to late summer from scab although fruit scab is minimal. **Diseases:** major scab.

‘Indian Summer’ 3.0 early June to mid-February

{ Red fruits, rose-red flowers, broad round form }. **Positives:** consistent annual, large blooms; prolific mid-summer to fall display of large red fruits; contrasting fruits complement yellow-orange fall foliage. **Negatives:** persistent fruit mummies; early defoliation from scab. **Diseases:** Major scab.

©‘Lancelot’ 2.8early October to early December

{ Yellow fruits, white flowers, dense round form }. **Positives:** diminutive size is great for space limited areas; consistent tree form; fruit is a pleasing mix of cider and yellow. **Negatives:** extremely tight, dense tree form; fruit/flower mostly hidden on the interior of the tree. **Diseases:** no scab.

‘Liset’ 3.2 early July to mid-December

{ Maroon-red fruits, rose-red flowers, open round form }. **Positives:** consistent fruit display; nice fall contrast of fruits with peach colored foliage; new foliage is deep burgundy and matures to a bronze green. **Negatives:** awkward splayed growth habit; minimal fruit-foliage contrast; fruit mummies hang on until late fall. **Diseases:** trace of scab. Note: Unusual but apparently normal splitting of bark along branches and trunk is characteristic.

©‘Louisa’ 1.7 late July to mid-December

{ Lemon-gold fruits, pink flowers, true weeper form }. **Positives:** arching, graceful branches are upswept at ends; tree form is greatest asset; fruit darkens to a gold-orange with a rose blush. **Negatives:** fruit is scattered and sparse. **Diseases:** no scab.

‘Mary Potter’ 2.2 mid-August to late November

{ Red fruits, white flowers, weeping-spreading form }. **Positives:** petite, abundant masses of red-dish fruit; profuse pink buds open to an exquisite blossom display; elegant spreading growth habit; salmon colored underbark revealed as older bark peels away. **Negatives:** fruit mummies a distraction during winter months. **Diseases:** trace of scab.

Crabapple	Aesthetic Rating Average ²	Time of Effective Fruit Display ¹
<p>‘Molten Lava’ 2.0 early August to mid-December</p> <p>{Red-orange fruits, white flowers, spreading-weeping form}. Positives: consistent, profuse flower/fruit shows; fiery red fruits and yellowing fall foliage on cascading branch structure create a “molten lava” effect; excellent winter ratings due to layered horizontal branching; feathery effect created by red pedicels after fruit drops. Negatives: somewhat cluttered as tree matures; lacks summer appeal. Diseases: minor scab.</p>		
<p>©‘Narrangansett’ 2.9 early September to mid-December</p> <p>{Cherry-red fruits, white flowers, upright spreading form}. Positives: consistent fruit/flower display; abundant, firm fruit. Negatives: cluttered, dense branching structure; scabby leaves remain on tree; awkward tree form. Diseases: major scab on leaves and fruit.</p>		
<p>‘Ormiston Roy’ 2.5 late August to late March</p> <p>{Orange-yellow fruits, white flowers, broad round form}. Positives: very attractive glossy orange-yellow fruits with cream underside and red blush; orangish deep-furrowed bark colors as temperatures drop; nice, consistent floral show. Negatives: tenacious mummified fruit may remain up to one year. Diseases: trace of scab.</p>		
<p>©‘Pink Satin’ 3.3 mid-August to mid-October</p> <p>{Dark red fruits, pink flowers, upright spreading form}. Positives: very nice true pink bloom; fruit a pleasing red with yellow underside. Negatives: persistent blackened mummies can be overwhelming; heavy fruit scab; cluttered branch structure. Diseases: minor scab on leaves and fruit.</p>		
<p>©‘Prairie Maid’ 2.6 early June to late November</p> <p>{Rosy-red fruits, deep pink flowers, round spreading form}. Positives: reliable wonderful flower display; abundant clusters of small fruit; emerging foliage is burgundy red. Negatives: lacking in winter appeal; waxy coating dulls fruit finish until coating weathers off. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<p>‘Prairifire’ 2.4 late June to early December</p> <p>{Purple-red fruits, coral-red flowers, round form}. Positives: yearly spectacular bloom contrasts emerging red-tinged green foliage: firm purplish fruits slowly age to cherry red; fall colors of orangish spur leaves contrasts fruits and other foliage; unique lenticel-speckled bark. Negatives: mediocre winter and early summer appearance. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<p>‘Professor Sprenger’ 3.5 late September to mid-November</p> <p>{Orange-red fruits, white flowers, upright spreading form}. Positives: consistent large, attractive white flowers; large orange-red fruits; young tree form with fruit is stunning. Negatives: muddied mummies persist until late winter; awkward growth habit and tree form with maturity; dull appearance of large yellow-green fruit during the summer. Diseases: no scab; however, extensive yearly defoliation from frog-eye leaf spot.</p>		

©‘Purple Prince’ 2.6 late June to late December

{Blue- purple fruits, rose-red flowers, broad round form}. **Positives:** large, dark unusual colored fruit; very nice yearly fruit/flower display; fast growing tree; leaves deep purple green. **Negatives:** lacking fruit/foilage contrast; mediocre winter appearance. **Diseases:** no scab.

‘Red Jade’ 2.3 late August to mid-November

{Red fruits, white flowers, weeper-spreader form}. **Positives:** graceful spreading growth habit add winter interest; attractive oblong fruits; yearly prolific red flower buds open to large white blossoms. **Negatives:** unsightly fruit rot; scab on fruit can dull appearance. **Diseases:** minor scab on leaves and fruit.

‘Red Jewel’ 2.9 early September to mid-April

{Cherry red fruits, white flowers, narrow upright form}. **Positives:** Phenomenal firm fruits are appealing well into spring; very attractive blooms. **Negatives:** mediocre late winter to early spring appearance; very slow growing; tenacious mummies; tree form a bit awkward. **Diseases:** no scab; some fireblight problems.

‘Red Splendor’ 3.1 late May to mid-November

{Red fruits, rose-pink flowers, upright spreading form}. **Positives:** exceptional profuse, red fruits age to orange-salmon color by mid fall; red-tinged new, emerging foliage; reliable lovely pink flowers and fruit. **Negatives:** severe Japanese beetle feeding; early defoliation due to scab; poor winter ratings due to rotted, half-eaten mummies. **Diseases:** major scab on leaves and fruit.

M. sargentii 2.7 mid-August to early November

{Red fruits, white flowers, low wide spreading form}. **Positives:** greatest asset is attractive low-spreading growth habit; petite snowy white blossoms; effective firm fruits in late summer to early fall. **Negatives:** fruits deteriorate rapidly; shriveled raisin mummies persist into winter. **Diseases:** no scab.

‘Sentinel’ 2.8 late September to early March

{Red fruits, white flowers, vase-shaped form}. **Positives:** columnar growth habit; sensational floral display of profuse red-pink buds open to pink-tinged white flowers; pleasing yellow fall foliage contrasts fruits; attractive firm fruits persist into early spring. **Negatives:** tenacious fruit mummies hang into summer; mediocre summer appearance. **Diseases:** minor scab.

©‘Silver Drift’ 2.6 mid-September to mid-April

{Cherry-red fruits, white flowers, broad round form}. **Positives:** very persistent showy fruit and flower; nice contrast of last year’s fruit with emergence of new leaves in spring; fast growing tree. **Negatives:** tenacious mummies; fruit obscured by foliage. **Diseases:** trace of scab.

Crabapple	Aesthetic Rating Average ²	Time of Effective Fruit Display ¹
<p>‘Silver Moon’ 2.8 early September to mid-December {Burgundy fruits, white flowers, oval upright form}. Positives: glossy unique colored fruits; peculiar dense upright candelabra growth habit; good late, snowy white floral show. Negatives: alternating yearly bloom from profuse to sparse; poor winter ratings due to cluttered growth. Diseases: no scab but fireblight can be a problem.</p>		
<p>©‘Sinai Fire’ 2.4 mid-August to late October {Red-orange fruits, white flowers, unique spreader form}. Positives: uncommon open growth habit with horizontal branches; good specimen plant; yearly floral show with large blooms. Negatives: fruit scattered and sparse; slow growing; unique form is not for every landscape. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<p>‘Snowdrift’ 2.9 mid-August to mid-November {Salmon-red fruits, white flowers, broad round form}. Positives: reliable excellent flower show; distinctly colored attractive fruits; feathery effect of pedicels in winter. Negatives: fruits shrivel by late fall; chlorotic summer foliage. Diseases: major scab.</p>		
<p>‘Strawberry Parfait’ 2.5 mid-August to mid-April {Red-cream fruits, pink flowers, unique spreader form}. Positives: fruits age to deep red; newly emerged foliage red-tinged; unusual erratic upright-spreading growth habit; good fall color; fruits remain firm through late winter. Negatives: tenacious fruit mummies; unusual shape is not for every landscape. Diseases: trace of scab.</p>		
<p>‘Sugar Tyme’ 2.6 early September to mid-April {Brilliant red fruits, white flowers, rounded form}. Positives: stunning sugar-white floral display; showy, persistent firm fruits through late winter; good overall form. Negatives: general mediocrity if flowers/fruits are not abundant; fruit drops all at once before bloom. Diseases: trace of scab.</p>		
<p>‘White Angel’ 3.1 mid-October to early February {Red fruits, white flowers, broad upright form}. Positives: reliable, attractive flowers; showy medium-sized abundant fruits; red coloration of previous season’s twig growth. Negatives: awkward splayed growth until tree matures; tenacious mummies distract during mid- to early spring. Diseases: no scab.</p>		
<p>‘White Cascade’ 2.7 mid-September to mid-November {Yellow fruits, white flowers, true weeper form}. Positives: exquisite flower display of cascading flower covered branches; appealing overall tree form. Negatives: perpetually dingy foliage throughout summer from scab; fruit scab completely destroys any potential fruit effect; early and extreme defoliation. Diseases: major scab on leaves and fruit.</p>		

Crabapple	Aesthetic Rating Average ²	Time of Effective Fruit Display ¹
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M. zumi ‘Calocarpa’ 2.8late August to mid-December

{Bright red fruits, white flowers, round spreader form}. **Positives:** excellent yearly flower show; clusters of abundant tiny, shiny red fruits; feathery pedicel effect in winter. **Negatives:** fruits shrivel and deteriorate rapidly in early winter; lacks winter appeal. **Diseases:** trace of scab.

☉ - denotes crabapple selections for which there is only three years (1996-1999) of observations.

1 Season of fruit impact derived from biweekly observations from 1995-1999 only. Effective fruit impact is defined as the period from when the tree’s fruit first contributes to tree aesthetics until the fruit is no longer ornamental.

2 Aesthetic Rating Scale

Ratings include flower, foliage, form, and fruit characteristics, and effects of disease and pest problems. The rating system is as follows:

- 1 = Exceptionally ornamental crabapple. Based on outstanding flower, foliage, fruit or form at time of rating.
- 2 = Highly ornamental crabapple. Good flower, foliage, fruit, or form at time of rating.
- 3 = Adequate as a landscape crabapple. Not highly ornamental at time of rating.
- 4 = Sub-standard as an ornamental crabapple at time of rating.
- 5 = Ornamentally unacceptable as a landscape crabapple at time of rating. Not recommended for use in the landscape.

Scab ratings are from 1993-1999 unless a “☉” is present by the crabapple name which denotes there is only data from three years (1996-1999) of observations.

none = no scab noted.

trace = a few leaves affected; no negative effect on aesthetics.

minor = 20%-50% of leaves affected; significant defoliation and/or leaf yellowing; negative effect on aesthetics.

major = 50%-90% of leaves affected; severe defoliation and discoloration of leaves; almost complete negation of any aesthetic effect.