

SOUTHERN CRAB APPLE

Malus angustifolia Michx.

Plant Symbol = MAAN3

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials
Program



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Alternate Names

narrow-leaf crab apple

Uses

Wildlife: Fruits are eaten by whitetail deer, bobwhites, grouse, pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, skunks, foxes and many small birds. Its fruit is occasionally used for jelly, preserves and cider.

Timber: Its hard, heavy wood makes excellent tool handle, levers, and small wooden ware articles.

Recreation and Beautification: Typically a weed tree but quite attractive in a native setting.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Malus angustifolia Michx., Southern crab apple is commonly found from southern Virginia south to

northern Florida, west to Louisiana, and north to Arkansas. Southern crabapple is a shrub or small tree, 20 to 30 feet in height, with a short trunk 8 to 10 inches in diameter; with rigid, spreading branches forming a broad, rounded, open crown. Leaves are elliptical or oblong, blunt at tip, wavy sawtoothed, hairy when young; dull green above, paler underneath. Bark is gray or brown; furrowed into narrow scaly ridges. Fruit ¾-1" in diameter, like small apples; yellow-green, sour with long stalk.

Adaptation and Distribution

Southern crabapple grows best in well drained, moist and acid soils (pH 5.0 – 6.5) of valleys and lower slopes, stream banks, borders of woodlands, fence rows, and old fields in the southeast, often forming thickets.

Southern crab apple is distributed throughout the Southeast. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment

Southern crabapple is mainly propagated by grafting using a whip graft, budding or from softwood cutting.

Management

Southern crabapple should be planted in full sun to enhance development of flowers and fruit. It generally requires little pruning. Pruning is generally done to remove sucker growth, open up the center of the plant to light and air, to cut undesirable branches and shape the tree. If planted with redcedars (*Juniperus virginiana*, *Juniperus scopulorum*), keep a minimum distance of 500 ft to prevent spread of cedar apple rust.

Pests and Potential Problems

Like most crabapples, Southern crabapple is susceptible to fireblight, cedar apple rust, apple scab, canker, scale, borers and aphids.

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

Southern crabapple is rarely available in nurseries.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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