

**BEESON'S**  
McHenry County  
Nursery, Inc.

# Nursery News

March 2008 - Research & Development

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## More Than Just a Pretty Face- Behind the Bountiful Blooms of Flowering Crabapples

In the upper Midwest, when winter turns to spring, we look to Flowering Crabapples to color the landscape. Behind these pretty clouds of spring color are high-performance ornamental trees, with not only attractive features, but also strong branching and form, eye-catching bark, disease and pest resistance, and hardiness.



In spite of their potential value, Flowering Crabapples are underutilized in many landscapes. As tree form or multi-stem, a specimen Crabapple can be used in space-restricted landscapes, without overwhelming the site. Their growth habit usually requires minimal pruning to keep under control, and crabapples can be an excellent alternative to large trees in urban sites where height might be a constraint.

There are more than 600 known Flowering Crabapple cultivars grown around the world in arboretums. Over 200 are grown commercially, having been selected for the very best performance in production and in the landscape.



### HEALTHY CRABAPPLES START FROM ROOTS UP

At Beeson's McHenry County Nursery, we offer a selection of Flowering Crabapple cultivars with a variety of different looks and uses. (See Chart attached) We are proud to add a delightful addition to the collection of Flowering Crabapple selections with the introduction of 'May's Delight'.

Grower and propagator, Mary T. McClelland (of our sister company [Glacier Oaks Nursery](#)), propagates the majority of our multi-stem Flowering Crabapple cultivars by summer cuttings. (Other propagation methods include budding and grafting for tree-form and seed propagation for the native species.) The strongest cuttings are developed into liners, which are grown in pots for several years as we strive for a vigorous top and a well-branched root system.

### GROWING CRABS

Small container plants are then shifted up to larger containers depending on the species, and maintained in our [GO Trees Container Tree system](#). Many of the container-grown Crabapples are sold as 10-15 Gallon plants and successfully established in landscapes. Others are lined out and spaced in the forest soils of our growing fields to develop a specimen crabapple. We also have several reputable liner nurseries from which we acquire most of our tree-form liner stock, which are planted bare-root in early spring. Our field soils are perfect for the mid-range nutrient requirements of the Flowering Crabapple cultivars hardy to the Midwest.



### DIGGING CRABS

For maximum flowering, Crabapples are best dug before growth begins in the spring. We stop digging Crabapples after the buds begin to noticeably swell, to avoid transplant shock. Flowering Crabapples can also be dug in the Fall as soon as September.

### PRUNING CRABS

Flowering Crabapples can really be pruned anytime, but respond the best to winter removal of water sprouts from branches, suckers from the graft point, and general lanky growth. The genus lends itself to easily controllable and uniform growth, and by enhancing the natural form, it takes very little maintenance to maximize their display in the landscape.

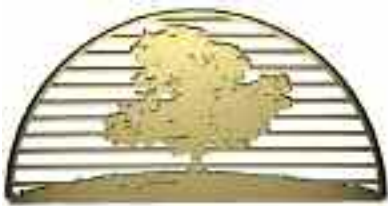


Plants in the genus Malus (including crabapples and apples) hybridize freely in the wild, making the genetics of open pollinated seedlings very difficult to determine. For this reason, propagation methods including budding, grafting and cuttings have been used for hundreds of years to produce known and proven cultivars. Today many cultivars are recommended along with a specified rootstock for different regions.

Inquiries or more information is available by contacting **McHenry County Nursery** [Green Tech](#) Mary McClelland  
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### LOADS OF OPTIONS!

**Flowers:** Crabapples cultivars vary in flower color, size, fragrance, timing, and abundance. Flowers can be white or various hues of pinks, reds, and purples. The different stages of the flower can also have different colors, from tight bud to balloon to full bloom. Flowers can be single, double, or semi-double. They can bloom in late April, late May, or early June. Flowering can be abundant every year, alternate years, or heavy or light each year.



**Foliage:** Leaf colors can range from light to dark green, to shades of purple, red, and bronze. Some selections also have attractive reddish spring foliage that matures to a different color, adding to the kaleidoscope of year-round color that crabapples offer.

**Fruit:** The fruits of the crabapple also vary by color, size, and shape. Colors cover the spectrum of reds, oranges, and yellows. Sizes range from 1/2" to 2 1/2" in diameter, and they can be perfectly round or slightly oblong. After flowering, fruits begin to appear by July and ripen by November. Different cultivars also have different degrees of fruiting abundance. Some selections have fruit that persists on the tree over winter, providing food for birds, and attractive all-season interest.



**Form:** Many different sizes, forms, and rates of growth can be found among the Flowering Crabapple cultivars. From dwarf to full sized, multi-stemmed to tree form, rounded, spreading vase shaped or weeping, there is a crab for every landscape site. With unique branching structures and shiny gray-brown scaly mature bark, all the crabapple cultivars add an interesting visual element in the winter landscape.



**Where to Plant:** Our Flowering Crabapple cultivars are hardy for the Midwest, and vary by pest and disease resistance depending on the cultivar and the weather. In general, crabapples prefer full sun (for the best flowering and fruit), and prefer moist well-drained soil at a pH 5 to 6.5, but are a very adaptable group of plants. Crabapples can tolerate alkaline soils, clay soils, moderate soil salt, drought, and pollution.

The variety and adaptability of crabapples has value in many sites, from homes, schools, parks, and commercial and public landscapes, to highway plantings and urban sites. They also offer an attractive low maintenance option for under utility lines, with most mature heights low enough to stay below the lines.

Few other trees or shrubs compare to the beautiful Flowering Crabapples in full bloom in spring, or have as many different seasonal interest. Flowering Crabapple are versatile ornamental trees in a range of colors, textures, and sizes that add beauty and value to any landscape.

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### Small Spreading

Latin Name	FLOWERS			FOLIAGE		FRUIT	
	Bud Color	Bloom Color	Fragrant?	Color	Fall Color	Color	Persistent?
<a href="#">Malus Candymint Sargent</a>	Carmine	Pink -Edged in Red	No	Purplish to Bronze Green	Yellow	Deep Purple	No
<a href="#">Malus Pink Princess™</a>	Pink	Rose Pink	No	Reddish in Spring to Bronze Green	Purple Green	Deep Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus sargentii</a>	Rosy Pink	White	Yes	Dark Green	Yellow	Dark Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus sargentii Tina</a>	Red	White	Yes	Dark to Medium Green	Yellow	Bright Red	Yes

### Small Rounded

Latin Name	FLOWERS			FOLIAGE		FRUIT	
	Bud Color	Bloom Color	Fragrant?	Color	Fall Color	Color	Persistent?
<a href="#">Malus Coralburst</a>	Coral Pink	Rose pink, Double	No	Dark Green	Yellow Green	Bronze Red	No
<a href="#">Malus sargentii Firebird®</a>	Red	White	No	Dark Green	Yellow	Dark Red	Yes

### Medium Spreading

Latin Name	FLOWERS			FOLIAGE		FRUIT	
	Bud Color	Bloom Color	Fragrant?	Color	Fall Color	Color	Persistent?
<a href="#">Malus Adams</a>	Carmine	Pink	No	Reddish in Spring to Medium Green	Orange Red	Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus x Beeson May's Delight®</a>	Bright Rose	Pink to White -Edged in Red	No	Reddish Green	Orange, Red, Maroon	Dark Burgundy Red	No
<a href="#">Malus Floribunda</a>	Deep Pink	White	Yes	Dark Green	Yellow	Yellow-Red	No
<a href="#">Malus sieboldii zumi Calocarpa</a>	Pink	White	Yes	Dark Green	Orange, Yellow	Red	Yes



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*Medium Upright Oval  
To Rounded*

Latin Name	FLOWERS			FOLIAGE		FRUIT	
	Bud Color	Bloom Color	Fragrant?	Color	Fall Color	Color	Persistent?
<a href="#">Malus Beverly</a>	Pink	White, Alternate	No	Light Green	Yellow	Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Golden Raindrops®</a> (‘Schmidtcutleaf’)	Pink	White	No	Medium Green, Cutleaf	Yellow	Golden Yellow	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Harvest Gold®</a>	Pink	White	No	Dark Green	Yellow	Golden Yellow	Yes
<a href="#">Malus ioensis Prairie Rose</a>	Deep Pink	Light Pink, Double	Yes	Reddish in Spring to Bright Green	Yellow Orange	Fruitless	
<a href="#">Malus Prairifire</a>	Crimson	Deep Pinkish Red	No	Reddish in Spring to Dark Green	Yellow	Maroon Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Profusion</a>	Deep Red	Deep Pink	No	Purplish in Spring to Bronze Green	Yellow	Oxblood Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Purple Prince</a>	Pink	Red	No	Bronze Reddish Green	Yellow	Blueish Purple	No
<a href="#">Malus Red Jewel®</a> (‘Jewelcole’)	Light Coral	White	No	Dark Green	Yellow	Cherry Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Robinson</a>	Crimson	Deep Pink	No	Reddish Bronze Green	Copper Orange	Dark Red	No
<a href="#">Malus Royal Raindrops®</a>	Pink	Bright Pinkish Red	No	Purple, Cutleaf	Orange Red	Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Snowdrift</a>	Pink	White	No	Medium Green	Yellow	Orange Red	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Spring Snow</a>	White	White	Yes	Medium Green	Yellow	Fruitless	
<a href="#">Malus Thunderchild</a>	Deep Pink	Rose Red	No	Purplish	Dark Red	Dark Red Purple	No

*Weeping*

Latin Name	FLOWERS			FOLIAGE		FRUIT	
	Bud Color	Bloom Color	Fragrant?	Color	Fall Color	Color	Persistent?
<a href="#">Malus Louisa</a>	Rose Pink	Pink	No	Dark Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yes
<a href="#">Malus Molton Lava®</a>	Dark Red	White	No	Medium Green	Yellow	Red-Orange	Yes

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