

Maine Tree Species Fact Sheet

Common Name: Hawthorn (Thorn-apple)

Botanical Name: *Crataegus spp.*

Tree Type: Deciduous

Physical Description:

Growth Habit: The hawthorn is a small tree that prefers a well-drained but moist soil. It is however adaptable to other conditions, including clay soils. Once established, hawthorns are quite tolerant of drought, wet soils, wind and air pollution. The bark of the hawthorn is generally dark brown to gray in color and scaly. The twigs are slender, rigid and usually have long thorns. They form a compact crown due to their zigzag method of growth. The leaves are simple, alternate, from 3-4 inches long and 2-3 inches wide. They are serrate on the margin, somewhat lobed, thin and dark green in color.

Height: Hawthorns reach a height of 15-18 feet. Many varieties of hawthorn are hardy to Zone 4.

Shape: Hawthorns are typically broad-rounded, low branched trees with wide spreading, horizontal, thorny branches which are densely set, making it difficult to grow grass under them.

Fruit/Seed Description/Dispersal Methods:

The flowers appear in the beginning of June in flat, showy white clusters. The $\frac{3}{4}$ inch red fruit resembles a small apple. It appears in clusters and matures in early autumn. The flesh is thin and mealy and encloses from 1-5 rounded nutlets

Range within Maine:

There are thirty-one different species of hawthorn found in the state.

Distinguishing Features:

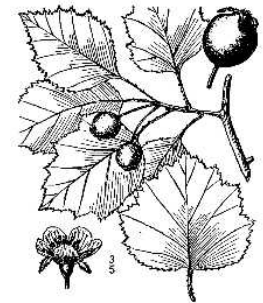
Hawthorns can usually be recognized by the small, red apple-like fruits and the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2-inch thorns on the branches.

Interesting Features:

The wood is heavy, hard, and close grained. It is used to some extent for handles and other small articles. The fruit is used for jellies.

Relationship to Wildlife:

The fruit is highly prized by birds in the winter.



Landscape Use:

There are many varieties of hawthorn, including several thornless types. They can be planted in groupings and also make a good specimen tree in the landscape. Because of their adaptability and tolerance to pollution, they are frequently planted along town/city streets.

Common Problems or Pests of the Tree in Maine:

Hawthorns are virtually pest and disease free. They are, however, susceptible to fireblight.

References:

Forest Trees of Maine, Twelfth Edition. Maine Forest Service/Department of Conservation. 1995.

Know Your Trees. Cope, J.A. and Fred E. Winch, Jr. Cornell Cooperative Extension. 1992.

Friends of Plants for a future: <http://www.scs.leeds.ac.uk/pfaf/crataegs.html>

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, 5th Edition. Dirr, Michael A. Publishing L.L.C. 1998.

