

Malus spp.—Flowering Crabapples

Flowering crabapples are in the same genus as the edible apple—the genus *Malus*. Along with peaches, apricots, pears, plums and cherries, crabapples are in the rose family, Rosaceae. There are about 25 natural species in the genus *Malus*, most of which are grown for their ornamental flowers and fruits and are known as flowering crabapples. Flowering crabapples are native to northern Asia, Japan or North America. There are more than 200 named varieties of flowering crabapples. These have been developed by interspecies hybridizations and usually involve more than two species.

Flowering crabapples are among the most valuable and trouble-free ornamental, flowering trees. They are usually oval-shaped and spreading about almost wide as they are tall with multiple trunks and crooked and twisting branches. The leaves are deciduous, simple, dark to medium green and have finely toothed margins. The flowers, which cover the trees in the spring, are often fragrant and are pale to deep pink or red in color. The fruits are small, fleshy and apple-like. They range in color from yellow, orange or red and provide autumn and winter color. Flowering crabapples need full sun and tolerate a variety of soils.

The variety that VAF planted between John and McAllister was ‘Hopa.’ It was introduced by researchers at South Dakota State University. It grows rapidly to 25 ft tall by 20 ft wide and has dark green leaves, and large 1-1.5 in across), fragrant rose-red flowers. It also bears abundant orange-red fruit that is suitable for making jelly. It was produced to tolerate summer heat. This variety is no longer available at nurseries. We are replacing the original ‘Hopa’ trees with other varieties that have pink flowers.

