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Flowering Crabs For Idaho Gardens

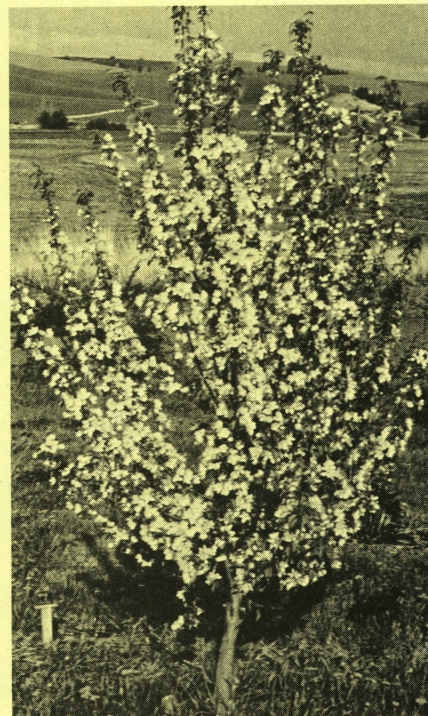
A. A. Boe and E. M. Werner

Flowering crabs are one of the most satisfactory flowering trees for Idaho gardens. Whether you have a single tree, a small clump or row or a mass planting on a hillside, the show of color is sure to attract attention. Flowering crabs have the added value of colored fruit in the fall. This fruit can often be used to make jelly or as a food source for birds and small animals.

Since flowering crabs are available in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, one should be available to meet most every need. Flower colors range from white through pink to red and the fruit may be yellow, red or purple. The leaves of the trees are also of interest since they range in color from green to purple. The trees may grow upright, have a round head or weep, and will mature at heights of 10 feet to 30 feet. Usually these trees are quite spreading so you should allow adequate space for them to develop.

Flowering crabs are generally low maintenance plants. Pruning should be kept to a minimum since a dense tree is desirable for heaviest blooms. In Idaho, insects and diseases affecting flowering crabs are few. If you raise apples or live in an apple-growing area, give the flowering crabs the same spray that you give your apples. If you plan to use the fruit from the flowering crabs, you will need to control codling moth to prevent wormy fruit. If other pests are a problem, your local Cooperative Extension agent or nurseryman can diagnose the cause and recommend treatment.

Flowering crabs can be planted bare root or ball and burlap in the spring. Container-grown plants can be planted any time.



These trees are generally very hardy and can be grown in a wide range of soil conditions. Drainage is important, however. A well-drained spot should be selected.

In the landscape, flowering crabs may be used as individual lawn trees or as an accent point in a tall screen. A row of flowering crabs along a driveway or fence row can be extremely attractive. Some of the smaller varieties can be worked into many landscape situations.

The accompanying table lists a number of crabs that have been observed over the past 8 years on the University of Idaho Plant Science Farm at Moscow. So many other varieties exist that a complete listing is not possible. Select a variety to fit your specific taste and needs. You may need to visit more than one nursery before you find the variety you want. Some mail order nurseries carry a number of varieties.

The Authors — A. A. Boe is a professor of plant science and E. M. Werner is a graduate assistant, both in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Idaho, Moscow.

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Cultivar	Growth habit	Leaf color	Bud color	Flower color	Fruit size	Fruit color	Comments
Almey	spreading	light bronze	deep	pink	½"	red	Persistent fruit. Good flower color. Excellent tree.
Bechtel	upright	green	pink	pink	none	none	Large double flowers.
Dainty	weeping	purple	purple	light purple/pink	¼-¾"	purple russeted	A good tree but neither flower nor fruit are showy.
Dolga	upright	green	light pink	white	¾-1"	yellow red blush	Very good; fruit good for jelly.
Eleyi	spreading	bronze	red	red	¾"	purple red	Very good in flower and fruit.
English (White Angel)	upright	green	pink	white	¾"	red	A good crab. Excellent fruit.
Flame	upright	light bronze	light pink	light pink	½"	red	Very good. Attractive fruit, stay into winter.
Golden Haret	upright	green	pink	white	¾"	gold	Tree is very showy with fruit. Tree structure is coarse.
Hopa	upright	bronze	red	red	½"	red	One of the best crabs. Fruit persist. Good for jelly.
Katherine	spreading	light bronze	pink	light pink	¼"	orange brown	Excellent trees. Flowers are semi-double, very large.
Malus prunifolia 'Xanthocarpa pendula'	spreading	green	deep pink	light pink	½"	gold	Good. Attractive fruit stay on into winter.
Mary Potter	spreading pendules	green	red	white	¼"	bright red	A very spectacular small tree in bud, flower and fruit. Excellent.
Pink Cascade	Weeping	light bronze	pink	lilac pink	¾"	red	Good, small weeping tree. Fruit do not last well.
Pink Spires	upright	light bronze	pink	lilac pink	¾"	deep red	Showy fruit. Large flowers. Good.
Pink Weeper	weeping	bronze	red	lilac red	½"	red	The best weeping crab. Gorgeous in flower and fruit.
Red jade	weeping	green	pink	white	¾"	bright red	Grown primarily for fall effect of fruit. Good.
Red Silver	spreading	bronze	red	red	¾"	purple	Flowers are small. Fruit persist into winter.
Red Splendor	spreading	light bronze	red	pinkish red	¾"	red	Fruit persist into winter. Very good flower color.
Royalty	upright	purple	purple	purple	¼-¾"	purple	Little contrast between leaves and color of flowers. Fruit do not stand out.
Sargents	spreading	green	bright red	white	¼"	red	Dainty flowers on a small tree. Good for limited space. Excellent ornamental.
Snowdrift	upright	green	pink	white	¼"	bright red	Spectacular tree in bud, flower and fruit. Excellent.
Sparkler	spreading	bronze	red	pinkish red	¼-¾"	deep red	Excellent. Small weeping tree. Very good flower color.
Strathmore	upright	green	pink	lilac pink	¾-½"	red	Fruit are conical. A good tree. Showy flowers.
Van Eseltine	narrow upright	green	red	light pink	¾"	red	A unique tree. Flowers are semi-double, very large. Excellent for use where pyramidal form is needed.
Vanguard	upright flat top	bronze	dark pink	dark pink	¾"	red	Unique tree form, large flowers. Excellent.