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## Crape Myrtle

By Anson Nursery

Have you noticed all the small to medium sized trees blooming this time of year? Or noticed a neighbor with a colorful tree? Chances are good that you are looking at a Crape Myrtle in full bloom. These great trees come in many different colors and growth habits.



Crape Myrtles are commonly used for focal points in the Landscape to add color and height. If you are looking for a tree that blooms in the summer, these are great options for your yard. There are very few trees that offer so many colors to choose from. Colors can range in different shades of Red, Purple, White and Pink. Since there are so many options, the use in the landscape is endless. Once you decide on the color, planting and maintenance is easy.

If your landscaping is lacking a focal point or you just want to add some color to the yard. A Crape Myrtle would be a great option. It's hard to find a colorful tree that is cold hardy, low maintenance and drought tolerant all in one. Crape Myrtles are the answer.

Here are some Basic Guidelines to enjoying your Crape Myrtles:

- Make sure you have a sunny location. You want at least 4-6 hours of sun.
- Do not plant too deep. Make sure you can still see the top of the root ball after the installation.
- Add your favorite mulch to help aide in the moisture control.
- Water daily depending on the time of year for the first Month. Then adjust accordingly.
- Trim off the expired blooms / seeds to promote new growth and blooms.
- Fertilize every quarter with any "all purpose" time release. Crape Myrtles are not picky eaters.

Crape Myrtles are very low maintenance and drought tolerant once established. They are very tough under different conditions, which brings me to my next topic of "Crape Murder"

Crape Murder is a term used for an improper trimming method. Basically, the tree gets hacked back at the same location year after year. This causes permanent damage to the tree and will cause long term scarring. Not to mention the ugly "knuckles" from the damage you see in the winter when it's dormant.

The Best pruning methods that we recommend is tipping. Basically removing all the seed heads and any stems that are smaller than a half inch in diameter. Trim branches that are crossed and touching each other. Also, any suckers or low growth at the base will need to be cut off. Keep the shape of your tree symmetrical once you are finished.

These are some helpful basic tips on the care and maintenance of your Crape myrtles. If you're interested in a Crape myrtle and want a colorful addition to your landscape, Our Staff would love to meet with you. We offer different varieties and sizes for you to choose from as well as delivery and planting options. If you want to learn more about the care and needs of your Crape Myrtle you can contact our office at (352)628-4554 or your local Extension Office at (352)527-5700.

*Jason Aguilar has been in the Nursery and Landscaping business for over 18 years and graduated with an AA degree in Landscaping Design and Horticulture. Jason has also been a previous member of FNGLA for many years. For questions call Jason at 352-628-4554.*