



Crape Myrtles

By Jason Aguilar

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. It's hard to find a colorful tree that is cold hardy, low maintenance and drought tolerant all in one. Once you decide on the color, planting and maintenance is easy. Crape Myrtles are the answer.

Here are some Basic Guidelines to enjoying your Crape Myrtles:

- They love the sun. Crape Myrtles need at least 4-6 hours of sun daily to thrive.
- Do not plant too deep. Make sure you can still see the top of the root ball after the installation.
- Moisture Control. Add your favorite mulch to help aide in the moisture control.
- Water daily depending on the time of year you plant the Crape Myrtle. After the first month adjust watering accordingly.
- Regular trimming. It is important to trim off the expired blooms/seeds to promote new growth and blooms.
- Fertilize every quarter with any "all purpose" time release fertilizer. 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.

These are some helpful basic tips on the care and maintenance of your Crape myrtles. If you're interested in adding a pop of color to your landscape, then the Crape Myrtle would be a great choice. 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.



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