

Lagerstroemia indica

Crape Myrtle is a spectacular flowering tree or shrub for the summer months. This native of southern Asia and Australia has been used in landscapes throughout the southeastern U.S. for its fast growth, cold hardiness, and brilliant flower spikes from June through September.

Crape Myrtle is a deciduous plant, losing its alternately arranged leaves in the fall as they turn reddish in color. Their beautiful, exfoliating bark makes up for its bare branches in the winter time.

Crape Myrtles are available in many varieties which may grow from 3 feet tall to over 20 feet in height. Flower colors range from white to lavender, purple, pinks and reds, in different varieties.

Planting:

Crape Myrtles grow well in many different types of soil; however, best growth can be expected when plants are set in a well-drained, improved soil in full or half-day sun. Plants should be placed in the ground at soil level, and a three to four foot mulched ring should be left around the base to conserve moisture and help protect from lawn maintenance equipment.

Fertilizing:

Apply one-half cup of **Sunniland 6-6-6** fertilizer per tree or shrub every six to eight weeks during the growing season. Larger established trees or shrubs should be fertilized in early spring and late summer with 1-3 pounds of **Espoma Tree-Tone** per plant. Fertilizer should be applied throughout the entire root zone, which includes the area out to and slightly beyond the canopy spread of the plant.

Pruning:

After each blooming, remove old bloom stalks for increased flowering throughout the summer. Prune to shape in late winter. Shrub form varieties can be pruned into tree form over time.

Plant problems:

Powdery mildew: Caused by poor air circulation during humid weather. This fungus produces a whitish powder on buds and leaves causing leaf distortion and flower malformation.

Spray with Systemic Fungicide according to the proper application rate as specified on the label. There are powdery mildew resistant varieties of Crape Myrtle.

Root-rot: Disease which attacks the roots and may cause premature death of the plant; usually occurs from excess moisture around the root zone.

Solution: No control available for this disease. Plants should be placed in a well-drained location with little or no chance of standing water or poor drainage.

Aphids: Sucking type insects that attack new growth and flower buds, causing distorted leaves and flowers. *Solution:* Spray with Insect Killing Soap according to the proper application rate as specified on the label.

If you are currently in the midst of an aphid invasion, do not despair! Attract native ladybugs to your garden by simply choosing plants that are natural attractants. Read more on our blog titled [Attracting Ladybugs to your Florida garden.](#)

Rockledge Gardens

Commonly Found Varieties This Summer Season

(see notes on which come in shrub, multi-trunk,
and tree form)

Basham Party Pink	pale-pink blooms	20+ feet; broad vase shape	Upright tall tree; orange-red autumn color; tree form only
Black Diamond	bloom color varies	10-12 feet tall; compact shrub	Typically come in white, red, or pink; dark foliage; shrub form only
Center Stage	bloom color varies	8-12 feet tall; compact shrub	Typically come in coral, pink, or red; dark foliage; shrub form only
Enduring Summer	lavender blooms	4-5 feet tall; compact shrub	Dwarf variety; shrub form only
Muskogee	lavender blooms	20+ feet; broad tall tree	Fast rate of growth; shrub and multi-trunk forms
Natchez	white blooms	20+ feet; broad tall tree	Fast rate of growth; shrub, multi-trunk, and tree form
Red Rocket	deep red blooms	20+ feet; wide canopy	Reddest of the reds; fast growing; very mildew resistant; shrub form only
Tonto	fuschia pink blooms	8-12 feet; upright plant	Exfoliating bark; fall leaf color-maroon; shrub, multi-trunk, and tree form
Tuscarora	coral-pink blooms	20+ feet; broad vase shape	Fast rate of growth; good heavy bloomer; shrub, multi-trunk, and tree form