

CRAPE MYRTLES

Characteristics & Care



Crape Myrtle Dynamite

There are many species of Crape Myrtle and most are native to Asia. The common Crape Myrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica*, native to China and Korea, was introduced in 1747 and has been planted all over the South. Over the years there have been literally hundreds of selections named with variations of flower colors, growth habits and mature sizes.

We often use Crape Myrtles in the landscape because they bloom for a long period in the summer. We also value them for their peeling bark, fall color and the grace of their natural form.

Crape Myrtles are as tough as they are beautiful. This plant prefers hot, sunny climates (6-8 hours minimum for good blooming) and in South Carolina many varieties will grow to tree-size proportions. **It is important to select a variety appropriate to the space available for planting in order to avoid severe pruning that may alter the natural shape of the tree.** Examples of some of the varieties available are:

Size	Examples	Mature Height
Dwarf	Razzle Dazzle series	2-3 ft
Small	Acoma, Pink Velour	8-10 ft
Medium	Arapaho, Catawba, Dynamite	15-20 ft
Large	Natchez, Muskogee	25-30 ft

Crape Myrtles are very adaptable to different soil types, but they do require good drainage for root growth. They are very drought tolerant once established, but flowering can be enhanced with irrigation during extended dry periods.

Crape Myrtles typically need little or no fertilizer. If the soil quality is poor, an application of a balanced fertilizer (10-10-10) in early spring will produce enough energy for growth and flower production. We recommend using **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** or **Fertilome Root Stimulator** for new plantings to stimulate early root formation and development.



FYI... Trees continually fertilized with nitrogen will put on a lot of vegetative growth but may not flower as profusely. Avoid high nitrogen fertilizers and eliminate grass beneath trunk (3-5 ft out) to allow moisture to reach root system and to prevent excess nitrogen from lawn fertilizer.



PRUNING - SEE BACK

PRUNING CRAPE MYRTLES

Crape Myrtle flowers are produced on new growth. They will produce flowers without any pruning, however, with a light pruning they will produce larger clusters of flowers and will bloom more profusely.

Pruning in late January or February will stimulate vigorous new growth. Encourage a second bloom in summer by snipping off the flower clusters immediately after they fade.

To develop a tree shape, remove all limbs growing from ground level except the three to five strongest limbs. As the tree matures, continue to remove new growth from the base of the tree and remove lower lateral branches one-third to halfway up the height of the plant. Remove branches that are crossing or rubbing against each other.

Properly Pruned



To keep a Crape Myrtle at a manageable height, prune moderately by removing all twiggy growth back to lower growing side branches. This will give the plant a more uniform appearance. Practice corrective pruning to remove defective or dead branches. In particular, remove small twigs or branches in the center to create more open space for sun and air movement. This will discourage fungus problems.

The Razzle Dazzle® Crape Myrtles (dwarf series) do not require pruning, however, a light pruning may be needed to shape them. Be sure to do this in late January or February.

SUCKERS

New shoots growing around the base of the tree (suckers) can be pruned any time. Immediately spray the cut area with **Bonide Sucker Punch** to prevent resprouting.

DISEASE AND PESTS

Powdery mildew fungus (white, powdery substance on new growth) and Japanese Beetles are two common problems for Crape Myrtles. We recommend using **Ferti-lome 2-in-1 Systemic** as a preventive treatment for both. This product includes a fungicide and insecticide and is applied by mixing with water and pouring around the base of the plant. It works through the root system of the plant. Repeat applications per label instructions.

Another way to fight the Japanese Beetle issue is to get rid of the little pests before they grow up to be such a problem. FYI.....Grubs are the larval stage of Japanese Beetles. We recommend treating your lawn with **Hi-Yield Grub Free Zone II** in the spring and summer to eliminate Grubs. You may still have a few Japanese Beetles visiting from your neighbor's yard, however, the overall population will be significantly decreased.

Improperly Pruned



Results



Dazzle Me Pink



Results

