



FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Crepe Myrtles 101

One hundred days of exquisite summer blooms, attractive fall foliage, unique bark, good disease and insect resistance and drought-tolerance - what's not to like about Crepe Myrtles? Here's an in-depth look at one of Hampton Road's favorite trees- from Crepe Myrtle varieties to care and maintenance and much more.

KEY FEATURES:

- Offers year-round interest.
- Bloom all summer until fall.
- Available in white, purple, pink and red.
- Interesting bark provides winter interest.
- Provides excellent fall color from gold to orange to red and purple.
- Available in a variety of sizes and shapes that will work in most any size landscape.
- Loves full sun – less the six hours of direct light will reduce blooms.
- Most crepe myrtles are for zones 7-10 (zone 6 possibly).
- Very drought tolerant once established.
- Good disease and insect resistance.

VARIETIES (SOME OF OUR FAVORITES)

- Catawba - dark purple blooms (12 -15 feet tall). Light gray to brown bark and dense habit.
- Dynamite – dark brick red blooms (1 -20 feet tall). Light brown to beige bark with an upright habit.
- Muskogee – light lavender blooms (20-25 feet tall). Light grayish to brown bark with a broad habit.
- Natchez – pure white blooms (20-25 feet tall). Cinnamon brown bark and a broad habit.
- Tonto – fuchsia pink blooms (10-15 feet tall). Cream to taupe bark and a dense habit.

- Tuscarora – dark coral pink (20 feet tall) Mottled, light brown bark with a rounded, upright habit.
- Zuni – purple blooms (8-12 feet tall). Light gray bark with a dense habit.

NEWER VARIETIES

- Ebony and Ivory - white flowers (10-12 feet tall). Rounded growth habit.
- Bellini dwarf - dark lavender-purple blooms (3-4 feet tall). Compact habit.
- Plum Magic - deep purple flowers (6-8 feet tall). Rounded, compact form.

FERTILIZING

- Bio-Tone Starter Plus is an all natural plant food enhanced with bio stimulants, beneficial bacteria and mycorrhizae. Helps plants establish fast, withstand environmental stress, promote deeper roots, better blooms, and improve soil structure.
- Greenleaf (traditional or organic) – high nitrogen content and other trace elements that other fertilizers don't include. Designed specifically for Hampton Roads.

FEEDING

- Feed from the drip line - the outermost circumference of a tree canopy where water drips from the leaves and onto the ground.
- Feed twice a year (spring/May 1), when leaves start coming out and again in November after blooming or leaves have fallen off.

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- Fertilome Rooting and Blooming – highly concentrated plant food that helps promote bigger more vigorous blooms and assists with root development (a lack in phosphorus may be why they are not producing blooms).
- Triple Super Phosphate can also help to produce blooms.

WHEN AND HOW TO PRUNE

Though pruning a crepe myrtle tree isn't necessary to the health of the plant, many people like to prune them in order to "tidy-up" the look of the tree or to encourage new growth.

Follow these tips for successful pruning:

- Choose the right size tree for your space from the start, so severe pruning isn't required (choose a variety and size for your space).
- Limb up - crepe myrtles tend to grow in a shrub-like shape. Limbing up helps to create a tree-like shape and is used to expose the trunk.
- Don't prune in the same spot every year- this can cause damage.
- Prune flush and as close to the trunk as possible.
- Identify the main branches of the tree, and prune interfering limbs.
- Remove crossing branches that may rub together and can possibly harm tree.
- Remove all dead or dying branches.
- Thin out interior branches to open up the canopy to allow light and air to filter throughout the entire tree. This will encourage foliage bloom while decreasing the risk of disease.

- Remove any sucker growth around the base of the tree.

TIP: Don't prune too much. You can always remove more later.

INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL

- **Powdery mildew** and **leaf spot** are the most prevalent issues in our area but are easy to treat and prevent. Treatments include Copper Soap, F-Stop Fungicide or Broad Spectrum Fungicide.
- Insects like aphids and mealybug are relatively easy to treat and prevent. Treatments include Triple Action, Neem Oil, Bee Safe 3-in-1, and spinosad soap.
- Japanese Beetles - treatments include spinosad soap, or broad spectrum fungicide.

TIP: Remove leaf litter (fallen leaves) from underneath your tree especially in fall to help prevent fungus from spreading. Be sure to dispose of leaves after removing.

CREPE MYRTLE BARK SCALE

Crepe myrtle bark scale has become more of a problem in our area.

SYMPTOMS/SIGNS OF BARK SCALE:

- Small, white insects that reproduce very quickly - 1 adult can lay 250 egg with 2 to 4 generations each.

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- Almost always found on the bark (not the leaves).
- Spreads via wind and can spread from plant to plant.
- Multiple treatments will be necessary.
- Treat with horticultural oil and other dormant oils (oils suffocate).
- These insects also secrete a sticky substance called **honeydew**, which will lead to **sooty mold**, a fungus that turns black and appears all over the plant.
- Treatments for sooty mold included broad spectrum fungicide, F-Stop or Neem Oil.
- Horticulture Oil (can be used year-round) suffocates insects and takes multiple treatments over 1 to 2 years. Other treatments include BeeSafe 3-in-1, Fertilome Triple Action and Neem Oil.
- Systemic insect drench is another good treatment for heavy infestations (best if applied in the fall). It is easy to apply, but be sure to follow the instructions on the label. Use in combination with horticultural oil (use year-round).

For an in depth look at Crepe Myrtle bark scale checkout our blog here

<https://www.mcdonaldgardencenter.com/blog/identifying-and-treating-crepe-myrtle-bark-scale>

TIP: Oil products such as horticultural oil, etc. should not be applied when temperatures are above 90 degrees during the day, since it can create a greenhouse effect. Spray in the evening, when temperatures cool down.

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