



Plant Fact Sheet

**Crape Myrtles** (*Lagerstroemia indica*)

**Introduction:** Crape myrtles are one of the most commonly planted small flowering trees in Georgia. There are numerous cultivars and flower colors available. These durable landscape plants are also known for having attractive bark, drought tolerance, and site adaptability.



trunk form



Single

Exfoliating bark

**Flowering:** Crape myrtles flower from late spring until late July, depending on the cultivar. Cultivars that flower from mid to late July are Sioux, Yuma, Cherokee, Carolina Beauty, Choctaw, and Powhatan. A second flush of flowers may be achieved during the growing season by pruning old flower heads. Crape myrtles should be planted in full sun and watered during drought for best flowering. Presence of insects and disease can cause plants not to flower.

**Pruning:** Crape myrtles should be pruned in late winter. Avoid pruning in early fall. Crape myrtles are most commonly pruned for a tree form with a multiple or single trunk. If possible avoid pruning branches larger than your finger. Pruning large branches disfigures and weakens the trees. Suckers should be removed. Naphthalene acetic acid (NAA) applied to suckers after pruning prevents re-sprouting. Crape myrtles can be pruned back to 6 inches from the ground for a shrub effect.

**Insects and Diseases:** Powdery mildew is the most widespread and serious disease of crape myrtles and is most active in the spring and fall. Powdery mildew can cover leaves, shoots, and flower buds causing leaf distortion and lack of flowering. This disease should be controlled when first noticed. Products such as Banner Max, Bayleton, Heritage, and Systhane, are systemic controls. FungAway, Funginex, and Immunox are available for homeowner use. Aphids are the most common insect problem of crape myrtles and produce honeydew which unsightly black sooty mold grows upon. Aphids can be controlled with Merit, Orthene, Cygon, and Insecticidal soaps.

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