

Malus sylvestris

European Crabapple



Malus sylvestris (European crab apple) is a fairly rare species. It can be found throughout Europe but not in large stands. The European crab apple grows in open woodland and forest edges along with, amongst others, *Quercus petraea*, *Quercus robur*, *Mespilus germanica* and *Corylus avellana*. The tree grows up to ten metres tall as a standard or multi-stem and ultimately develops an irregular, asymmetrical, round and open crown to around eight metres wide. Contrary to popular belief, only one of the eating apples we eat today has been proven to have this apple as its ancestor: the Granny Smith.

In the second half of April or early May *Malus sylvestris* blooms abundantly with pink then white blossom, coinciding with the emerging foliage. The flowers are an important source of nectar for bees and other insects. After flowering the small, yellow-green apples appear, measuring two to three centimetres and are eaten by birds and all kinds of mammals. *Malus sylvestris* is, therefore, an ecologically very valuable and highly decorative species. The egg-shaped to oval, hairless leaf is bright green and changes to yellow in the autumn. Juvenile trees have a grey, smooth bark which peels in maturity, and the twigs are red-brown and thorny.

Malus sylvestris grows best on poorer sandy soils, fertile loamy soils and moist stream valleys. The species prefers the brightest possible location and in its native habitat grows in wooded banks, in forest edges or light oak forests. In cultivation, the European crab apple is very attractive in parks and gardens. *Malus sylvestris* is wind-tolerant, and so an open site is not a problem.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: half-stem trees, woodland planting stock

USE

Location: park, central reservation, large garden, small garden, countryside, ecological zone | **Planting concepts:** food forest, Eco planting, Landscape planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: rounded | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 3 - 10 m | **Width:** 4 - 8 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 4A - 9A

ASPECTS

Wind: tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun | **pH range:** neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, butterflies, birds, nectar value 3, pollen value 3

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: raceme, striking, singular, small, scented | **Flower colour:** white-pink | **Flowering period:** April - May | **Leaf colour:** green | **Leaves:** ovate, ovoid, wide | **Autumn colour:** yellow | **Fruits:** striking, edible, small, drupe | **Fruit colour:** yellow, red, green | **Bark colour:** grey | **Bark:** smooth | **Twig colour:** red-brown | **Twigs:** thorned

