

Please Read-You may save a Phone Call “Yellow Sheet” Planting/Growing/Pruning Instructions

As the longest existing Crape Myrtle Nursery in the US(over 40 years) we've noticed some changes in the customer's knowledge of plants. Plants will arrive with fallen leaves in the box. This is normal.

Nowadays when most customers see some fallen leaves in the box or colored leaves the first thing they do is grab the phone and tell us "their crape myrtles are dead or diseased". They do not realize that some plants begin to drop their leaves in Fall(that's September) or the crape myrtle leaves change colors to orange-red-yellow and then then to begin to drop-often in the box(that's called Deciduous). Some Crapes that we ship for Winter Planting may not even have any leaves!(that's called Dormant) THEY ARE NOT DEAD.

They are simply going through their normal life cycle.

Calif. NEMA Certification # 0255. USDA Cert # FL0883. Certified All States.

Question we get asked the most: How do you Create a Tree with 3-4 different colored flowers("I never heard of that"): Just plant 3-4 different colored trees in the same hole with the root balls touching each other. Then you take a zip-tie or string and pull the 3-4 stems tightly together so they are touching. Give it about a year and it will become a single tree with 3 different colored flowers. Stems must be touching. For 4 plants dig a 2 milk jug size hole(see other side). Use Miracle Grow Potting Soil or a lot of compost/peat moss/bark mix.

In Spring YOU MUST cover and protect plants from late season unexpected freezes.

Repeat: Crape Myrtles begin to DROP their leaves in September- Winter. It is normal to see dry, dead, yellow, orange or red leaves when you open the box. Nothing is wrong with the plants. They ARE NOT dead. This is a totally normal with Woody Perennials prior to the new buds sprouting when planted. If you can't plant immediately just set the pots in the sun.

On cool nights Crape Myrtles will wilt if their roots get cold. As it warms-up they will perk back up.

We have found that plants ship better dry. Leaf dropping and dry plants are NORMAL in shipping of Woody Perennials. Do not water the plants every day because you may kill them.

DO NOT FERTILIZE THE FIRST YEAR and DO NOT WATER EVERY DAY. Watering Every day is the biggest reason customers kill newly planted Crape Myrtles. Do not listen to your Master Gardener Brother in Law who grows beautiful roses.

Northern areas:

We now have Crapes growing just about everywhere, here are some hints if you are in the NORTH(you are in the North if you have Cold Winters):

- 1) DO NOT fertilize the FIRST YEAR. Do NOT overwater Crapes, No Daily Watering.
- 2) STOP ALL CARE including watering in September to toughen them up for Winter.
- 3) All Crapes usually come back from the roots in **August** so don't dig them up even if the tops are dead and brittle. This happens in severe winters.
- 4) Mulch 2"-4". Some people cover and wrap them in severe cold.

(Take your crapes out of the bag and look for the popsicle stick name tag)

2 Letter Abbreviation: Each TAG is labeled with 2 Letters ie, WF stands for Worlds Fair, Ho stands for Hopi, NO stands for New Orleans, Zu stands for Zuni etc. etc.

This tells you what varieties you bought. Compare these 2 letters with the Invoice which we return to you

Plants are intentionally shipped dry. Water plants immediately. Place the plants in the sun and in about a week you will see all the dormant buds begin to grow and **the plants will come back fuller and with more branches** than when they left the nursery. Remember, these crape myrtles can take a lot of cold weather if they are first acclimated to the cold. That means don't take the plants straight out of the box and place them outdoors if the temperature can drop much below freezing. If you gradually let them prepare themselves for cold by being outdoors for several months, they can survive weather that will kill most annuals and perennials.

Is there a secret to growing beautiful Crape Myrtles?

Yes, and that secret is using a **peat moss based potting soil in the hole you dig**. (See other side) Picture in your mind a one gallon milk jug. That is the size of the hole you will dig for every Crape you are planting. Throw the dirt you dig away. Fill the hole with Miracle Grow potting soil(has peat moss in it) and take the Crape out of the pot and stick it down into the soil just a little lower, deeper than what it was in the pot. Water and mulch it. They love pine bark and compost mixed into the Miracle Grow. Start on next pot.

Light: They grow best in full sun and up to partial shade.

Soil Type: Crape Myrtles grow in all soil types. Follow planting instructions on other page. For MINI pots, whiskey barrels and hanging baskets use a light peat moss based soil(like Miracle Grow) for fastest growth and flowering.

Watering: They do well in any moisture situation from semi-dry to rainy. Do not water every day.

Fertilizing: Fertilize during second growing season with any of the water-soluble fertilizers such as Peters or Miracle Grow. Any analysis(like 20-20-20) about every 2 weeks works well. Osmocote type fertilizers also work well.

PRUNING:

Crape Myrtles are the most Pruneable woody plants in the world. They may be pruned almost any time of the year, except right before flowering May-July. This is because they flower on NEW GROWTH. Pruning creates Branching and New Growth therefore more flowers. If they get too tall, prune them. If you want them fuller, prune them. If you want more flowers, prune them especially cutting off the old seed pods. If you want a "tree look" prune off the lower branches.

How to Grow the Best Crape Myrtles Possible when Planting the Plants we Ship to You

www.crapemyrtle.com

SPACING: Miniatures 14" to 18", Dwarfs 4-6 feet apart, Medium and Tall Trees 8 to 12 feet apart. Plant closer if you want to block a neighbor which is the most common reason for close spacing.

By the way, we put an extra plant in 15% of our orders so if you received an extra plant-its your lucky day!

Select the area to be planted. Crape Myrtles are now grown all over the USA but the site should either have bright light, full sun, or partial sun. No heavy shade for Crape Myrtles. If the site gets the sun for part of the day then it's OK, but they do love Full, Hot Sun too. In Spring, **YOU MUST PROTECT PLANTS from UNEXPECTED FREEZES.** **1st**- Go to your local Garden Center and buy a 3 cubic foot bag of Potting Soil (about 1 bag for every 4 plants), the type that is made of Peat Moss and finely ground Pine Bark (Like Miracle Gro Potting Soil). Do not use heavy sand based mixes like Black Cow Brand. You want it to be light and "airy" with a lot of peat moss and shredded pine bark.

2nd For each Miniature Crape that you're planting dig a hole about the size of a 1 gallon plastic milk jug (1 foot wide by 8 inches deep). For each Tree or Dwarf Crape Myrtle that you plant dig a hole about the size of 2 plastic milk jugs (1 foot wide by 12 inches deep).

3rd Discard your dirt that was in the hole and pour the Peat Moss-Bark Potting Soil you just bought into the hole filling it up to the top. This is your secret to growing beautiful Crape Myrtles.

4th Make a hole in the potting soil mix with your fist pushing down into the soil. It's OK if you plant the plant you received from us "deep". Sometimes, especially with the Tree Crape Myrtles, you have to plant them deep so they will stand up straight. Water the plant in. After watering you may have to add a little more potting soil around the plant and tap soil down with your foot. It's OK to stake the trees with a stick so they will stand straight up. Leave the stakes up for 6 months.

5th Now put a good bit of mulch around the plant and it's OK if it touches the stem of the plant. Pine Bark or Cypress mulch is best. This is especially recommended for Customers in zone 4 and 5. Put mulch on 2" or even 3" inches thick.

6th If you plant the Crape Myrtles in Fall or Winter only water 2 or 3 times. Don't overwater! Using Miracle Grow or peat moss based soils helps prevent overwatering.

7th 2nd Season begin fertilizing with ANY fertilizer, liquid, slow release, granules weekly. Especially after plants are established they are heavy feeders and if you want blooms for 5 months you have to fertilize every 2 weeks throughout the growing season.

8th Cut off the old flowers, flower clusters, and round seed pods in July, August and September and if you keep fertilizing the plants they will keep blooming.

These are the simple Secrets for growing Crape Myrtles that bloom for 5 or even 6 months per year. Remember Crape Myrtles are different from any other woody perennial in that they bloom on NEW GROWTH MADE IN SPRING AND SUMMER. The more new growth you can create by planting them in a good potting soil and fertilizing weekly, the more flowers you will have to enjoy.