

**MAYHAW**  
***Crataegus opaca* Hook. & Arn.**  
plant symbol = CROP

Contributed by: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center

**Alternate Names**  
riverflat hawthorn

**Uses**  
*Wildlife:* Mayhaw's fruits is eaten by wildlife and the plant provides cover.

*Food:* The large, edible fruit is very popular for jellies, preserves and syrups. Other products made from mayhaw are juices, candies, pastries and wine.

**Status**  
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

**Description**  
*Crataegus opaca* Hook. & Arn., mayhaw, grows from southwest Alabama west to southern Arkansas and east Texas. It is a small tree or a large shrub with a relatively large trunk that grows up to 30 feet tall and 8 inches in diameter, with narrow, rounded crown. Leaves are oval, pointed, narrowing toward the stem, finely toothed from the middle to the tip (sometimes slightly lobed), dull green and downy beneath. Mayhaw's bark is dark reddish-brown, fissured and divided into dark brown scales. Flowers are 1 inch wide, white and borne in clusters of 2 or 3. Fruits are cranberry-like, small, round, yellow to bright red, fragrant and juicy.

**Adaptation**  
Mayhaw grows best in pure stands in moist, well-drained soils of riverbanks and borders of swamps. However, they may be found growing naturally in low, wet areas of North Florida. A fairly acid soil is necessary for successful growth.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

**Establishment**

Although mayhaw is tolerant of wet, very acid soils, better growth is achieved when it is planted on well drained, slightly acid soils. Mayhaw trees are long-lived and may have a 30 feet canopy diameter after 20 years. Because of the growth potential, recommended tree spacing for a permanent orchard is 15 to 20 feet in the row and 18 to 20 feet between rows (giving 109 to 161 trees per acre).

**Management**

Train trees to a single trunk at the base for easier operation of equipment under the trees. Prune plants each year to open up the canopy for more light needed by most cultivars. Central leader and modified central leader training systems used on apples can be used on mayhaws.

**Pests and Potential Problems**

Although there are no serious insect pest that feed on the young leaves and twigs, mayhaw is susceptible to diseases including brown rot caused by *Monilinia sp.*, cedar-quince rust caused by *Gymnosporangium clavipes*, and fireblight caused by *Erwinia amylovora*.

**Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**

'Big Red,' 'Red & Yellow,' 'Heavy Mason's Super Berry,' 'T.O. Super Berry,' 'Higway Super Berry,' 'Super Spur.' Seeds and seedlings are commercially available at forest seed companies and nurseries.

**Prepared By & Species Coordinator:**

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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