

## FIREBERRY HAWTHORN

*Crataegus chrysoarpa* Ashe  
plant symbol = CRCH

Contributed By: USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center



from Britton & Brown (1913)  
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**Alternative Name**  
round-leaved hawthorn

### Uses

**Erosion Control:** Because it tolerates a wide variety of sites, it can be planted to stabilize banks, for shelterbelts, and from wind and water erosion.

**Timber:** Although the wood is hard and strong, it has no commercial value except for tool handles and other small items.

**Wildlife:** It provides excellent cover and nesting sites for many smaller birds. Birds, rodents and other smaller mammals eat the small fruits. White tailed deer browse the young twigs and leaves.

**Beautification:** Excellent for environmental plantings including small specimen tree, shrub border.

### Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

### Description

**General:** It is a large shrub or tree that grows to twenty feet tall. It is intricately branched and very thorny. Leaves are smooth to hairy, very broad, usually with several shallow lobes, often dull sometimes shiny. Flowers are produced in several clusters. Its nearly rounded fruits are either bright red or yellow.

**Distribution:** Fireberry hawthorn grows from Newfoundland to Pennsylvania and west to the Rocky Mountains.

### Adaptation

Although it will succeed in partial shade and different soil types, it grows best in full sunlight, well-drained loamy soils, and will tolerate wet soils becoming drought tolerant once established. It is also wind tolerant making it a good tree species in shelterbelt planting. It is also tolerant of atmospheric pollution and performs well in urban settings.

### Establishment

**Propagation from Seed or Grafting:** Fireberry hawthorn can be propagated by either seeds or grafting. Successful propagation using seeds requires acid scarification followed by warm stratification and prechilling. Seeds, whose numbers per lb. varies with species, are planted early in the fall, in drill rows eight to twelve inches apart and covered with 1/4 inch of soil. Seedlings must not be kept in the nursery longer than a year.

Containerized trees should be planted when they are no more than eight feet tall, in the fall or spring. Balled and burlapped trees should be planted in early spring.

Grafting on seedling stock of *Crataegus oxyacantha* or *Crataegus monogyna* is best carried out in the winter to early spring.

### Management

Pruning should be done in the winter or early spring in order to maintain a clear shoot leader on young trees and/or remove the weakest branches to allow more light to pass through. Suckers or stems arising

from the roots should be removed when they become noticeable.

### **Pest and Potential Problems**

Although pests and diseases seldom affect it, it is susceptible to fireblight, cedar-hawthorn rust, cedar-quince rust, leaf blight and fruit rot, and leaf spot.

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

Consult your local nurseries to choose the right cultivar for your specific landscape.

### **References**

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