



Crape Myrtle Care

Crape myrtles are beautiful summer bloomers that go dormant in the winter. They come in a variety of colors, are cold hardy, and are easy-care for our area. Below are a few tips for getting the most out of your crape myrtles.



Prune in Winter

Crape myrtles should be pruned in the wintertime when they don't have any leaves. How much you prune is up to you, there is no need to do a severe prune (sometimes called "crape murder") but trimming back overall height if needed and thinning the branches will help the tree flush out well in spring. If you missed the pruning time in the winter, you can always prune later, just wait until after bloom time, otherwise you will cut off all of those beautiful flowers.

Water Wisely

Like any new plant, crapes want plenty of water to get started. However, once established they don't require a lot of extra water to keep them going. One good soaking each week is all they need through the spring, summer, and fall, and once they are dormant in the winter, they won't need much at all.

Watch for Suckers

No, we aren't on the lookout for a gullible person. All crape myrtles are naturally bushes. Even the pretty single trunk "trees" are naturally bushes and will sometimes grow shoots from the ground or lower down on the trunk. These shoots are called suckers. It doesn't mean anything is wrong, just trim them off when you see them to keep the energy of the plant headed up into the canopy.

Fertilize for the Best Blooms

Crapes aren't heavy feeders, but a spring, summer, and fall dose of The Kerby's Special fertilizer will keep them in top shape and ready to produce the biggest, brightest clusters of blooms.

Go for the Sequel

If you dead-head crape myrtles and trim off old blooms just as they are finishing you can sometimes get a second, lighter set of blooms to emerge. It can be tough to do on big crapes (since the flowers are so high up), but for your younger or smaller bushes or trees, you can extend your flower enjoyment.