

## Crape Myrtles

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Crape Myrtles are among the showiest blooming plants for full sun in the San Antonio area. The list of desirable characteristics is very long. Crape myrtles are available in many shades of red, pink, lavender, purple and white. There are four main categories of size for crape myrtles from dwarf (3-5 ft.), intermediate (5-10 ft.), medium (10-20 ft.), and tall (larger than 20ft.).

The large selection of sizes and colors available means that you can usually find the size and color of plant that fits perfectly into the space you have available. Select from the many sizes of crape myrtle available so that it fills the available space without requiring pruning every year to make it fit. Some crape myrtle varieties have good fall color and some selections have an attractive exfoliating bark that contributes interest to the winter landscape.

A key characteristic of crape myrtles is the ability of any selection to resist powdery mildew infections. If you plant a variety with poor mildew resistance you can expect the leaves to be deformed and the bloom period to be shortened most years. Consider the variety's resistance to powdery mildew before you buy it from the nursery. Avoid buying crape myrtles if the nursery does not have a chart reporting mildew resistance.

Dr. Jerry Parsons on his [plantanswers.com](http://plantanswers.com) has assembled a list of crape myrtles that he credits to being favorite performers of crape myrtle experts, including Neil Sperry.

With red blooms, **Tonto** is recognized as a superior performer in the intermediate size category. It has a high resistance to powdery mildew. Tonto also has showy maroon leaves in the fall and exfoliate bark. The medium sized crape myrtles with red flowers that were recognized were **Country Red** and **Dynamite**. For a tall crape myrtle with red flowers Dr Parsons identified Red Rocket. Red Rocket has a high resistance to powdery mildew.

If you are interested in a white flowered crape myrtle that grows over 20 feet tall, consider the **Natchez**. It blooms over a long period and has a high resistance to mildew. Natchez also has attractive exfoliating bark and red-orange leaves in the autumn before they fall.

**Muskogee** is a favorite lavender bloomed crape myrtle. It is in the tall category and ideal to serve as a specimen tree or part of a row of trees along a fence or driveway. **Muskogee** is highly resistant to mildew and offers red-orange leaves in the fall.

For a tall pink flowering crape myrtle consider **Tuscarora**. The color of the bloom is a dark rose. In fall the leaves turn red-orange and Tuscarora also has exfoliating bark. The variety is highly resistant to powdery mildew. For a pink dwarf crape myrtle, the experts identified **Pokomoto** as a selection to consider. In the medium size category **Tuskegee** and **Pink Velour** were recognized. **Tuskegee** has a high resistance to mildew, red-orange leaves in the fall and exfoliating bark. Note that **Pink Velour** only had fair powdery mildew resistance.

The most well-known purple is a medium size plant named **Catawba**. It has good resistance to mildew and red-orange leaves in the fall.