

**Malus baccata mandshurica.** First of the Crabapples to burst into bloom is the fragrant *Malus baccata mandshurica*, native of north-eastern Asia. This tree is one of the largest of its tribe and produces an abundance of pure white flowers, each rather more than one inch across and more fragrant than those of any other Asiatic Crabapple. In a wild state it is often more than fifty feet tall, with short, thick trunk and a broad, bell-shaped crown. Its fruits, each no larger than a good-sized pea, are yellow or shining red.

**Malus Sargentii.** The pigmy of the Crabapple family is *M. Sargentii*, with umbellate clusters of saucer-shape flowers of the purest white, in which nestle a tiny group of stamens tipped with clear yellow anthers. It is a low, densely branched shrub which hugs the ground, and is pre-eminently suited for planting on banks. The fruit is wine-red, covered with a slight bloom, and long persistent. From the salt marshes of Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan, came this gem, discovered and introduced and fittingly named for the man who brought the Arnold Arboretum into being some fifty-four years ago.

**Malus theifera.** Rigid of branch, with wands of blossoms often fifteen feet long, the Chinese *M. theifera* is the very quintessence of Crabapple loveliness. It is a small tree, seldom exceeding twenty feet in height, with sparse upright and spreading rather zigzag branches, which are densely studded from base to tip with short flower-bearing spurs. When in blossom the whole branch is transformed into a floral plume into which it is impossible to thrust a finger without touching a flower. The petals are reddish pink in the folded bud, white or delicately stained with pale pink when fully expanded. The fruit is tiny, dull greenish red and not showy. Its specific name is derived from the fact that in central China, where it is a feature of the thickets and margins of woods on the mountains, the peasants collect and dry the leaves and from them prepare a palatable beverage which they call red tea.

**Malus toringoides.** Like a Hawthorn in foliage, the leaves being deeply incised and lobed, though some of them are quite entire, and with fruit like a white heart cherry is *M. toringoides*, a newcomer from the mountain fastnesses of the Chino-Thibetan borderland. With its clusters of white flowers, produced with the unfolding leaves, the small, rather thorny tree is less attractive in blossom than many others but in fruit it is considered by some people the most beautiful of all the lesser Crabapples. It and the somewhat similar but smaller *M. transitoria* are the last of the Asiatic species to bloom.

In the Arboretum the Asiatic Crabapples are just opening their blossoms near the Administration Building, on the left hand side of the Forest Hills Road, and on the top of Bussey Hill. The main collection, however, is at the foot of Peter's Hill, and is best reached from South Street by way of the Bussey Street Gate.

E. H. W.



Wilson, Ernest Henry. 1927. "Malus toringoides." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 1(5), 20–20.  
<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.321789>.

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