

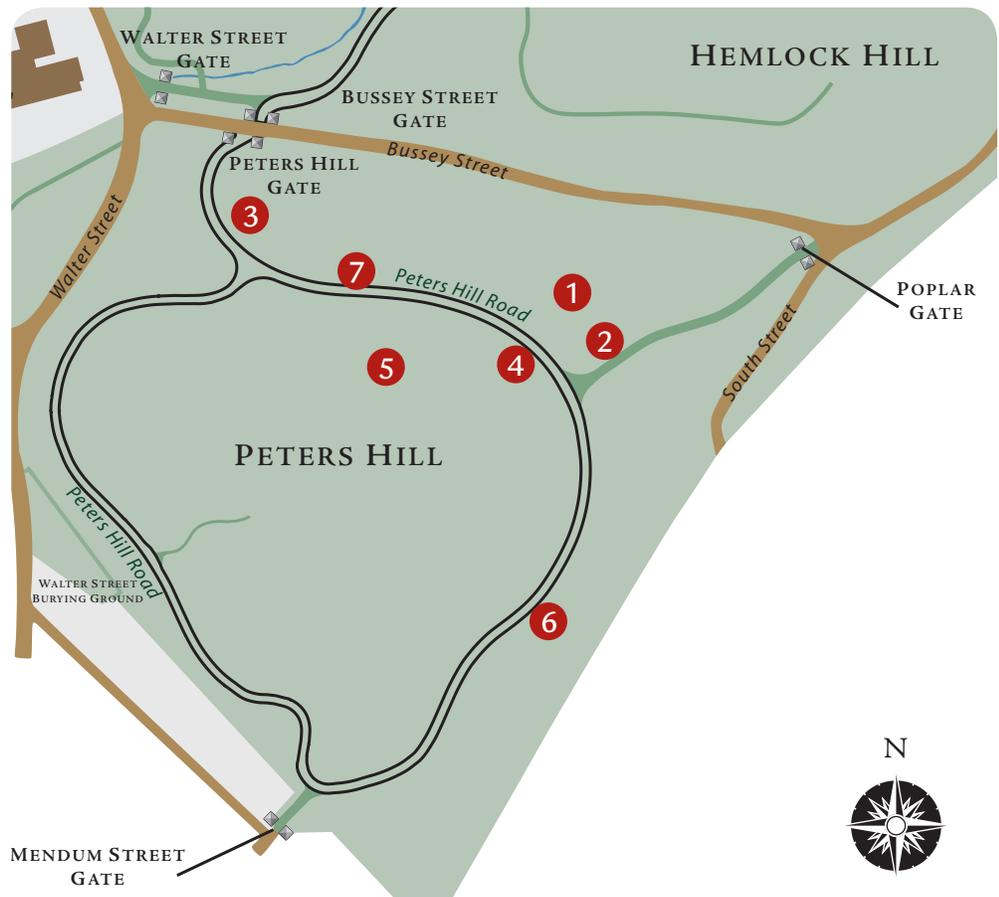
# Crabapple Collection



For more than a century, the Arboretum has played a pivotal role in the study, introduction, and promotion of the genus *Malus* (apples and crabapples). Today, the permanent collection includes nearly 500 plants representing approximately 166 taxa (kinds). These include many rarely seen species, many of which were collected from their native ranges, primarily in Asia. The collection also holds over one hundred cultivars, which have been selected for certain horticultural merits such as flower size and color, fruit persistence, and disease resistance.

Since 2010, the Peters Hill *Malus* collection has been the subject of intensive horticultural care and curatorial reviews. In addition to improving the appearance of the collection, these efforts will help in the development of a comprehensive management plan for the collection and will also enhance collections development strategies.

- 1 Redvein crabapple  
(*Malus pumila* var. *niedzwetzkyana*)
- 2 Prarie crabapple  
(*Malus ioensis*)
- 3 Sargent crabapple  
(*Malus sargentii*)
- 4 Cultivar of flowering crabapple  
(*Malus* 'Mary Potter')
- 5 Cultivar of cherry crabapple  
(*Malus x robusta* 'Arnold-Canada')
- 6 Cultivar of flowering crabapple  
(*Malus* 'Donald Wyman')
- 7 Tea crabapple  
(*Malus hupehensis*)



Crabapples bloom in white and shades of red ranging from pale pink to deep purplish rose. Often the flower buds are a darker shade than the open flowers, adding attractive contrast on blooming branches. Many *Malus* species bear pink buds that open to white flowers. The introduction of **1** *Malus pumila* var. *niedzwetzkyana* in the 1890s brought a new range of color to crabapples: this unusual variety has dark rose-red flowers, reddish purple fruit, and purplish new foliage, and was used in hybridizing to develop ornamental crabapples with deeper pink to red flowers.



Most *Malus* species are native to Eurasia, but there are a few that are native to North America. An example in the Arboretum's collection is **2** *Malus ioensis*, the prairie crabapple. This species bears large (1 to 1.5 inch diameter) fruit that provide food for wildlife when they fall but make the tree less desirable for most landscape uses. However, the double-flowered cultivar *M. ioensis* 'Plena' is popular for its fragrant, roselike, pink flowers that do not develop into fruit.

**3** Sargent crabapple (*Malus sargentii*) was named in honor of the Arboretum's founding director, Charles S. Sargent, who first brought seeds of this species to the United States from Japan. This naturally small-growing species reaches a height of only 6 to 8 feet but has a horizontal spread of 8 to 15 feet. It has white flowers and small (¼ inch diameter) red fruit that persists into winter.



**4** *Malus* 'Mary Potter' is another crabapple with a Sargent connection. This cultivar was hybridized and selected by Arboretum researcher Karl Sax in 1947 and was named in honor of Charles Sprague Sargent's daughter. It grows about 10 to 15 feet tall and 15 to 20 feet wide. Pink buds open to white flowers, which are followed by ½ inch diameter red fruit.



Most ornamental crabapple cultivars are small trees, typically maturing at 15 to 25 feet tall. A notable exception on Peters Hill is a specimen of **5** *Malus x robusta* 'Arnold-Canada'. At just over 40 feet tall, it towers over neighboring crabapples. In addition to its large size, this rare cultivar is noted for its showy yellow and red fruit and for developing good yellow fall foliage.



One of the best cultivars for colorful, persistent fruit is **6** *Malus* 'Donald Wyman', an Arboretum introduction named in honor of the long-time Arboretum horticulturist. Its ½ inch diameter bright red fruits are showy in fall and winter, and often some fruit is still present when the tree begins to bloom in the spring.

**7** Tea crabapple, *Malus hupehensis*, has a distinctive vase-shaped growth habit. Native to China, this species was introduced to the United States by the Arboretum after noted plant explorer E. H. Wilson brought seeds back from his 1908 China expedition. Tea crabapple often develops purplish fall foliage color, which contrasts nicely with its red-blushed yellow fruit.

