

Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster species*)

Alex X. Niemiera, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture

Summary:

Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf (some species are evergreen)

Height: 12 inches to 6 feet

Spread: 2 to 8 feet

Shape: Spreading or upright

Leaves are small and glossy green. Showy small, white/pink, spring flowers are followed by red or black fruit which cover branches in the fall. The fruit display can be quite showy.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 5 to 7

Moisture: Wet, moist, or dry

pH Range: 3.7 to 7.0

Light: Partial shade to full sun

Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include border, hedge, massing, specimen plant, & ground cover.

Planting Notes:

Due to sparse root system, plant container grown plants or those that have balled and burlapped roots.

Plant in rich, moist, well-drained soil if possible. Salt tolerant.

Care:

Control may be needed in some years for lacebugs, mites, scale insects, and fire blight.

Wood damaged by fire blight should be pruned and destroyed.

Problems:

Fire blight can be severe in some areas.

Susceptible to several insects, including lacebugs, mites, and scale insects.

Alternatives:

Consult local sources, including historic or public gardens and arboreta, regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Related species:

C. adpressus 'Praecox' (Creeping Cotoneaster) is a low ground cover 6 inches high. Small round green leaves turn red in fall and small red fruit persist into winter.

C. dammeri 'Coral Beauty' (Bearberry Cotoneaster) is a low-growing (2 feet tall; 6 feet wide) evergreen form.

C. divaricatus (Spreading Cotoneaster) is a deciduous shrub with arching, spreading branches. Red berries cover the branches during early fall (6 feet high; 8 feet wide).

C. horizontalis (Rock Cotoneaster) has low, flat, horizontal branches which create a unique effect. Excellent on a bank or trailing over a wall (3 feet by 5 feet).

Comments:

The *Cotoneaster* genus includes both deciduous and evergreen species.

There is generally a species available to fit any need, from a low ground cover to an upright screen. You will need to determine if a particular species is cold hardy in your area. The low-growing forms have a somewhat wild look to them due to the branching pattern. Branches will collect dead leaves in the winter.

This material was developed by Carol Ness as part of the Interactive Design and Development Project funded by the Kellogg Foundation.