Hawthorns

Genus Characteristics

Leaves: Leaves are small and leaf arrangement is whorled. Margins are serrate. Leaves can be lobed but not always.

Crataegus monogyna

Crataegus laevigata

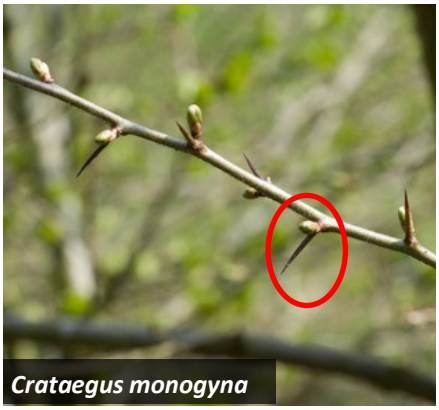
Fruit: Small fruits develop through summer at the end of flowering. Developing fruits are called haws and look like rosehips. Number of seeds can indicate species, so if fruits are present, dissect them to count the seeds.

Crataegus laevigata

Crataegus douglasii

Bark and Branches: Hawthorns have thorns on branches and twigs. Thorns can range in side from half an inch long to upwards of 2 inches. Hawthorn bark is thin and reddish brown. It can appear ropy, which gives trees a twisted appearance. Bark often gets plated with age.

Crataegus spp.


Crataegus monogyna

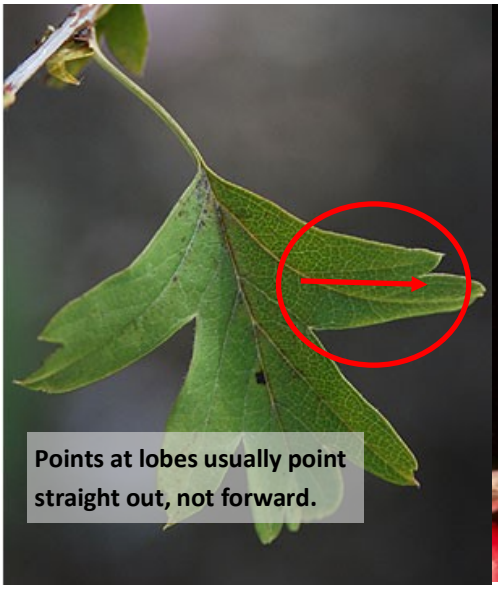
Form: Hawthorns are small trees and can appear shrubby. Crown is irregular and brushy. Hawthorns can be invasive. Varieties planted as ornamentals tend to be single-stemmed with a regular form. Naturalized specimens tend to be multistemmed and shrubby.

Crataegus spp.

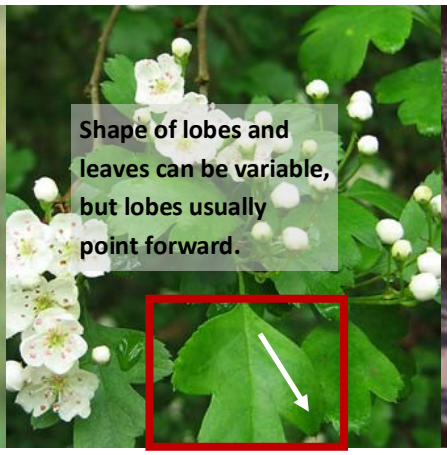
Crataegus spp.

Hawthorns

Crataegus monogyna—Common hawthorn



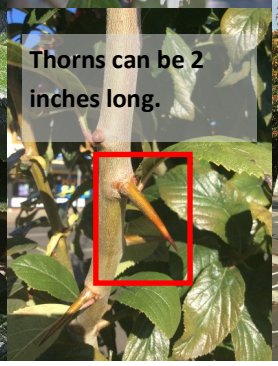
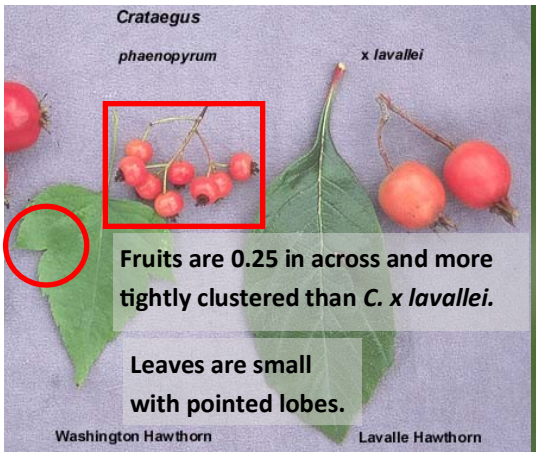
Crataegus laevigata—English hawthorn



Crataegus Hybrids and Cultivars

C. laevigata and *C. monogyna* look very similar and can hybridize with each other (C. x media). The surefire way to distinguish between the two is to dissect a fruit, if present. One seed is *C. monogyna*; two seeds is *C. laevigata*. If you aren't sure, take a sample! If Urban Forestry staff doesn't know, we'll ask the experts at Hoyt Arboretum.

Crataegus x lavallei—Lavelle hawthorn



Crataegus phaenopyrum—Washington hawthorn