Prairie Spy Apple

Malus 'Prairie Spy'



Prairie Spy Apple fruit
Photo courtesy of University of Minnesota

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

An old favorite apple tree from the University of Minnesota which produces large, firm and dense fruit that's excellent for baking and long-term storage on a vigorous and productive tree; makes a wonderful accent tree as well

Edible Qualities

Prairie Spy Apple is a small tree that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. It produces large red round apples (which are botanically known as 'pomes') with hints of light green and white flesh which are usually ready for picking from mid to late fall. The apples have a sweet taste and a crisp texture.

The apples are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Baking

Features & Attributes

Prairie Spy Apple features showy clusters of lightly-scented white flowers with shell pink overtones along the branches in mid spring, which emerge from distinctive pink flower buds. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The pointy leaves turn yellow in fall. The fruits are showy red apples with hints of light green, which are carried in abundance from mid to late fall. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up.

This is a deciduous tree with a more or less rounded form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Messy
- Disease

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Prairie Spy Apple is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping

Planting & Growing

Prairie Spy Apple will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more. This variety requires a different selection of the same species growing nearby in order to set fruit.

This tree is typically grown in a designated area of the yard because of its mature size and spread. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid.