

# *Crataegus viridis* ‘Winter King’: ‘Winter King’ Southern Hawthorn<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

‘Winter King’ southern hawthorn is a North American native tree which slowly reaches 20 to 30 feet in height and spread. It is very dense and thorny which makes it a popular choice for use as a hedge or as a screen. Unlike other hawthorns, the thorns are small and inconspicuous. The dark green, deciduous leaves turn beautiful shades of bronze, red, and gold in the fall before dropping. The handsome, silver-grey bark peels off in sections to reveal the inner orange bark, making ‘Winter King’ southern hawthorn a striking specimen planting in the winter landscape. The white blooms are followed by large, orange/red fruits which persist on the naked tree throughout the winter, adding to its landscape interest. The tree was originally selected for the outstanding winter berry color. The original tree from which the cultivar was selected is about 100 years old and 25 feet tall.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Crataegus viridis*

**Pronunciation:** kruh-TEE-gus VEER-ih-diss

**Common name(s):** ‘Winter King’ southern hawthorn, ‘Winter King’ green hawthorn

**Family:** *Rosaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 4A through 7B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Uses:** specimen; screen; hedge; reclamation; urban tolerant; container or planter; street without sidewalk; tree lawn 3–4 feet wide; tree lawn 4–6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100–200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft

**Availability:** not native to North America

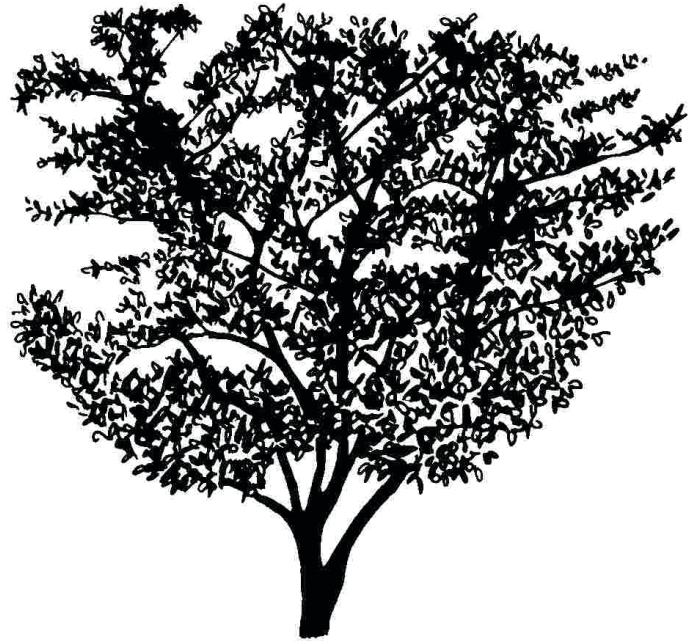


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Crataegus viridis* ‘Winter King’: ‘Winter King’ Southern Hawthorn

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Figure 2. Range

## Description

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet  
**Spread:** 20 to 30 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical  
**Crown shape:** vase, round  
**Crown density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** lobed, serrate  
**Leaf shape:** ovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy



Figure 3. Foliage

## Flower

**Flower color:** white/cream/gray  
**Flower characteristics:** very showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch, .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** red, orange  
**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; no thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current year twig color:** brown, reddish  
**Current year twig thickness:** medium  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline; well-drained; occasionally wet  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** yes  
**Outstanding tree:** yes  
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant  
**Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

## Use and Management

The multiple trunks and wide pyramidal to rounded shape make this adaptable tree well suited for the low maintenance landscape as a specimen. If lower branches are removed from the trunks, a more vase shape can be maintained. It has become quite popular and is available in many areas.

'Winter King' southern hawthorn should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. It is a very adaptable tree well suited for the urban landscape. The short thorns are usually not a problem, even on trees planted near streets. It is among the best of the many hawthorns that are available, receiving the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 1992 Styer Gold Medal Award.

Transplant in the spring for best establishment.

Propagation is by grafting.

## **Pests**

Problem pests are aphids, borers, caterpillars, and leaf miners.

## **Diseases**

It is susceptible to cedar-hawthorn rust but is more resistant than the species.