



**WILD ROSE**  
College of Herbal Medicine

# Hawthorn

## *Crataegus spp.*



**Description & Harvesting:** Hawthorn is a thorny deciduous shrub or small tree, but occasionally reaching a height up to 10 m, found throughout the most temperate regions of the world. *C. oxycanthoides* leaves are 3-5

lobed, with stipules; *C. monogyna* leaves are deeply lobed, almost like an oak-leaf; *C. douglasii* has 5-9 lobed leaves; all leaves of the various species are quite thick and leathery, dark-green above and paler below. Among wild or naturalized species the flowers are generally white, with 5 petals and 10-20 stamens, borne in terminal clusters or in the leaf axils; the odor in some species is quite 'stinky.' The pink or red-flowered cultivars are generally not used medicinally. The fruit is brilliant red, almost looking like a tiny apple, but beneath the skin the fruit is comprised of a bland white to yellow fleshy meal that surrounds one or more large seeds. In some species (e.g. *C. pinnatifida*) the fruit is quite large, fleshy, sweet and sour.

*Crataegus* species are typically found in moist, open places, at the edge of forests, in thickets, and along shorelines, stream banks, roadsides and coastal bluffs, at low to mid elevation.

**History & Folklore:** Hawthorn has a long history of use and was considered sacred by many traditions. The flowering branches of the Hawthorn tree heralded the beginning of the ancient Celtic festival of Beltane, and for this reason was called the 'Mayflower.'

**Other names:** Hawthorn, Mayblossom, Haw, Aubepine, Bianco Spino, Crataegus, English Hawthorn, Epine Blanche, Epine de Mai, Haagdorn, Hagedorn, Harthorne, Hawthorne, Hedgethorn, May, Maybush, Maythorn, Mehlbeebaum, Meidorn, Nan Shanzha, Shen Zha, Shanzha, Weissdorn, Whitehorn.

**Family:** Rosacea

**Parts Used:** Flowers, leaves, fruit

**Taste & Energetics:** sweet, bitter, astringent, cool and dry

**Actions:** cardiotoxic, cardioprotective, antioxidant, astringent, hypotensive, antiarrhythmic

This is an excerpt of our full plant monograph which is available to members of the Herbal Village