



## Cotoneaster

*(Cotoneaster species)*

Alex X. Niemiera, Professor, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

### 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

**Light:** Partial shade to full sun

**Moisture:** Wet, moist, or dry

**Soil Type:** Sandy, loam, or clay

**pH Range:** 3.7 to 7.0

### 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.*

