



HOW TO SAVE A DYING **CREPE MYRTLE TREE**



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Introduction

If you've spent any amount of time driving through the neighborhoods of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, you know that Crepe Myrtles are a staple in North Texas. We love our Crepe Myrtles, from their showy flowers that rain color into our yards all summer to their slick trunks and impressive displays of flaming fall foliage. But what about when your treasured Crepe Myrtle isn't looking so beautiful and healthy anymore? It could be sick or even dying, and if so, you must act fast. There are ways to save a sick or dying Crepe Myrtle tree. Here what you need to know:

What is a Crepe Myrtle?

Crepe Myrtles (also spelled Crape Myrtle) are shrubs and small trees, usually between 15-20 feet in height, best recognized for their stunning, long-lasting summer blooms. There are several types of Crepe Myrtles. In Texas, you'll primarily find the Indica Crepe Myrtle, or *Lagerstroemia Indica*, which is a variety that thrives in heat, humidity and even tolerates drought. Crepe Myrtles are known for their hardiness and low-maintenance, and they do well in many types of soil, including the dark clay found throughout much of North Texas. Crepe Myrtles are also relatively disease resistant. However, they are not invincible.

Signs that your Crepe Myrtle is dying or dead

Like people and animals, sometimes trees get sick. Crepe Myrtles have thin bark, which you can scratch with your fingernail. You can do this to check the health of your tree. Tree care professionals call this the "scratch test." If the bark underneath is green, your tree is still alive. If not, you might need to call for backup. Our team of ISA Certified Arborists at TreeNewal is always just a phone call or email away.



What's wrong with your Crepe Myrtle?

Perhaps your tree has passed the scratch test, but there are some other questionable things happening with your Crepe Myrtle. There are some common issues with Crepe Myrtle trees to be on the lookout for

Physical Damage, Late Leafing or No Blooms

Due to their thin bark, Crepe Myrtles are susceptible to damage by landscaping equipment. If you notice unusual behavior, such as your Crepe Myrtle being late to leaf out in the spring or if it doesn't produce any blooms by late June, take note. One of the first things you should look for is physical damage to the tree. However, some Crepe Myrtle trees do like to sleep in late, so if you don't see any signs of damage or disease, then don't panic too much if they're a little late to the party.

Crepe Myrtle Aphids

Crepe Myrtle aphids feed on the sap of Crepe Myrtle trees and are the most common Crepe Myrtle pest. These aphids are a pale yellow color and can typically be found on the underside of leaves. Like other sap-sucking insects, they do not fully digest their food and leave behind a sticky liquid called honeydew. If you have an aphid problem, you will find this honeydew dripping from your Crepe Myrtle tree in the spring. If not handled, this can lead to sooty mold. The best place to start is by spraying the tree down with a strong blast of water from the hose. If that doesn't work, our ISA Certified Arborists are happy to discuss further options. Give us a call at your convenience.



Crepe Myrtle Bark Scale

Another creator of honeydew is the Crepe Myrtle bark scale (or CMBS). This is a more recent addition to our list of potential ailments, as it was first identified in Texas in 2004; however, it has quickly made its presence known and is now one of the most common Crepe Myrtles pests in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. It is easily recognizable by its felt-like bumpy texture. The adult females are covered in gray or white encrustations that bleed a pink liquid when scratched. They can cover whole sections of the trunk or branches, giving the tree a scaly look. To get rid of these pests, you can start by washing the trunk and limbs of the tree with a mild mixture of dish soap and water applied by a soft brush.

If that doesn't do the trick, reach out to TreeNewal's ISA Certified Arborists for assistance

Sooty Mold

Sooty mold is a fungus that covers the leaves and looks like you dumped the contents of your fireplace onto your Crepe Myrtle. It's not growing on the foliage but rather on the honeydew we mentioned above, which can be caused by aphids, scales, and other insects. The best way to get rid of sooty mold is to get rid of the insects causing the honeydew. Once the insect infestation is handled, the sooty mold can be washed off, or it will eventually fall away on its own.



Powdery Mildew

Like sooty mold, powdery mildew is a fungus. You'll find it on your Crepe Myrtle during the spring or fall. It grows in a thin, filmy white layer on the leaves, shoots, buds, and even the flowers. Late in the year, a small, dark seed-like formation will grow among the mildew, which lives through the winter and can reinfect the Crepe Myrtle in the spring.

Getting rid of powdery mildew can be tricky, so it's better to try to avoid it in the first place by choosing a fungus-resistant variety of Crepe Myrtle if you have the option. If you don't then proper pruning can enhance the circulation and open the tree up to more sunlight. If your Crepe Myrtle already has powdery mildew, it's probably best to call in the professionals. Please reach out to one of our team at TreeNewal as soon as possible because powdery mildew can pose a real threat to your Crepe Myrtle.

Cercospora Leaf Spot

Another increasingly common fungus is Cercospora leaf spot, which is immediately recognizable by the irregular dark spots that form on the older leaves some time in mid to late summer. Those leaves will also turn fall colors and drop earlier than the other leaves. Luckily this ailment doesn't live through the winter. However, it can re-occur each year if you have a Crepe Myrtle tree that is not pruned for proper circulation or getting enough sunlight.



TreeNewal Can Help

We know you love your Crepe, Myrtle. You wouldn't be reading this if you didn't. If you've been battling any of the common issues mentioned above or noticed signs of other possible ailments and haven't been successful in trying to save your sick or dying Crepe Myrtle on your own, our ISA Certified Arborists are ready to help. TreeNewal offers insect management, disease, and fungus control, as well as trimming and removal. Give us a call at **817-264-7937** for more information or a quote.

Your neighbors at TreeNewal are here to help you. To reach our ISA Certified Arborists for professional tree maintenance and tree services, or even if you just have some questions, give us a call today at **817-533-8438**



www.treenewal.com

To learn more about How To Save a Dying Crepe Myrtle
Tree, call our Argyle and Southlake based teams

at **817-533-8438** or send us a message.



We're a little different than the average tree services company.

Learn more about TreeNewal's ISA Certified Arborists!

Our Dallas/Fort Worth-based tree doctors can explain how sustainable tree care
services add more value to your bottom line.

Healthy trees, healthy lives.

