Indian Hawthorn
(Raphiolepis indica)

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Introduction:

Indian hawthorn, also known as India hawthorne, it is an excellent shrub for landscapes in most of southern California. This plant is easy to grow and a great selection for low maintenance plantings. It is one of the best shrubs that can easily be kept at or under 3 feet.

Indian hawthorn are mounding, rounded, compact evergreen shrubs with leathery dark green leaves. They bloom profusely in late winter or spring, and often develop small berry-like, dark purple fruits enjoyed by birds. Star shaped flowers develop at branch tips in loose clusters and are white or pink, with five petals, and may be lightly fragrant. Plants grow 2 to 5 feet tall and are equally wide.

Varieties:

There are a number of named cultivars or varieties offering a range of plant sizes and flower color of white or various shades of pink. Some of the more commonly used ones are:

Springtime: 3.5 feet tall, and flowers in spring. Flowers are born in masses of pale pink flowers in loose terminal sprays. Flowers are useful as cut flowers for floral arrangements.
Ballerina: is up to 2 feet tall (60 cm) by 4 feet wide (1.2 m), with pink flowers, and reddish leaves in winter.
Indian Princess: up to 3 feet tall with light pink flowers.
Pinkie: 3 to 5 feet tall with medium to dark pink flowers.
Clara: is up to 4 feet tall (1.2 m), with mostly white flowers. Its new growth is reddish.
Umbrellata: White flowers, 4 to 6 feet tall.
Rosea Dwarf: Foliage is purple in the winter, flowers are pale pink.

History:
This plant comes from India and Asia, especially southern China, and is a member of the rose family, Rosaceae.

Landscape Use and Planting:
Often used as a low-growing mass foundation planting, low divider, or informal hedge, Indian hawthorn are naturally low-growing and wide (2 to 5 feet tall and wide), depending on cultivar or variety.   They can be planted in sun or part shade but must have relatively well drained soil.

General Care:
Indian hawthorn is quite rugged and moderately drought tolerant once established. Plants tolerate a range of soil conditions but must be located where soil drains relatively well. They withstand pruning or shearing, but look and flower best if left in their natural form. Plant in full sun or partial shade and keep soil uniformly moist until plants are established. For optimum performance, established plants should be irrigated every 5 to 10 days in the summer with enough water to rewet the root zone. Less frequent irrigation can be practiced to conserve water without compromising plant appearance, but overall growth and flowering may be reduced. Indian hawthorn is reported to withstand some salt spray and can be used on the leeward side of coastal houses. It is moderately tolerant to drought and is tolerant to heat, humidity, pollution, rabbits, and wind. Plants are propagated by seeds and cuttings in late summer.

Pest and Diseases:
This plant seldom has serious problems, but entomosporium leaf spot, fire blight, and root rot may be problematic. Avoiding overhead irrigation, especially at night, can reduce leaf spot disease; good soil drainage and avoiding over watering will help prevent root rot. Insect problems are not common. To learn more about pest problems and their management, click on this link:
http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/indiahawthorn.html

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