

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Pyracantha coccinea

[Synonyms : *Cotoneaster pyracantha*, *Cratageus pyracantha*, *Mespilus pyracantha*,
Pyracantha pauciflora]

FIRETHORN is a thorny evergreen shrub or tree. Native from western Asia to southern Europe it has small white or pinkish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Buisson ardent* (French), *Eldtorn* (Swedish), *Europäischer Feuedorn* (German), Everlasting thorn, *Feuedorn* (German), Fiery thorn, *Hlohovec červený* (Czech), *Hlohyně červená* (Czech), *Hlohyně šarlatová* (Czech), *Mittelmeer-Feuedorn* (German), *Pyracantha*, and Scarlet firethorn.

Warning – the thorns can cause physical injury. The fruit and possibly other parts are poisonous and for children in large amounts can cause stomach-ache and vomiting.

Coccinea means ‘scarlet’.

The precise circumstances of firethorn’s introduction to Britain are uncertain but authorities suspect that it arrived there between 1597 and 1629 from references (or lack of them) in records.

Firethorn is generally found in Europe as a garden ornamental plant.

In moderation the small apple-like bright red or orange fruit can be used to make a sharp-tasting sauce or jelly to accompany meat – and the fruit juice can be used to flavour drinks such as orange juice.

The berries are especially attractive for blackbirds.

Although used medicinally in the past the fruit has purgative qualities and it is no longer employed in that capacity.