

Crape Myrtle in Florida¹

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Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* species) has become a dominant landscape plant in north and central Florida and throughout the South. Breeding programs over the last 30 years have produced superior forms with a wide range of plant sizes and habits, improved flowering, new flower colors, ornamental bark, ornamental foliage, disease resistance and increased vigor. Its remarkable success as a landscape plant is largely due to the widespread usage of hybrid *L. indica x fauriei* cultivars.

History and Taxonomy

Lagerstroemia species are deciduous shrubs or trees with geographic origins in China, Japan, and other parts of southeast Asia. *L. indica* has been cultivated as an ornamental for centuries and was introduced to the southern United States over one hundred and fifty years ago. *L. speciosa*, commonly called Queen's Crape Myrtle, has been popular as a flowering street tree in tropical areas, including south Florida. *L. fauriei*, *L. subcostata* and *L. limii* have been used in breeding programs, and cultivars of *L. indica x fauriei* hybrids now constitute the most widely grown crape myrtles today. Other species of *Lagerstroemia* are used as timber in their native ranges in Asia.

The scientific name, *Lagerstroemia*, was coined in 1759 by Carl Linnaeus, who described and named the plant in honor of Magnus von Lagerstroem, an avid naturalist and director of the Swedish East Indies Company. Crape myrtle derives its common name from its crepe-like, crinkled petals, and the resemblance of its leaves to the true myrtle, *Myrtus communis*. "Crape myrtle" is a peculiarly-American term. Elsewhere in the world, "lagerstroemia" is often used as the common name for crape myrtle.

Characteristics

Crape myrtle is valued as a landscape plant for its prolific summer flowers, heat and drought tolerance, and year-round landscape interest. Flowering begins as early as May in some cultivars and continues into the fall. Each 6- to 18-inch cluster of flowers (or panicle) develops on the tips of new growth and is composed of hundreds of 1-to 2-inch flowers. Color ranges include shades of purple, lavender, white, pink and red, including "true" red, a relatively recent development. Some cultivars have bicolor flowers (two colors on each petal), some cultivars have flower colors that fade with age or certain environmental conditions, and other cultivars have panicles composed of a mix of flower colors.

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Many *Lagerstroemia fauriei* and hybrid cultivars feature beautiful, colorful bark. Strips of bark peel off in early summer to reveal mottled new bark ranging in color from pale cream to dark cinnamon to rich brown to bright orange. The bark color gradually fades over winter until it peels again the next summer.

Leaves on many of the *Lagerstroemia indica* cultivars are rounded or spoon-shaped and up to 3 inches long. Most hybrid cultivars have lance-shaped leaves up to 5 inches long and 3 inches wide while other species have even larger leaves. Leaves are often tinged red in the spring and turn dark green by summer. Several cultivars are known for new growth that is bronze, red or burgundy and some cultivars are claimed to have burgundy-colored foliage all summer. In north Florida and northwards, foliage may turn brilliant yellow, orange or red in autumn.

When the leaves fall in winter, crape myrtle becomes a living sculpture. The trunk and branches of tree-form plants have an attractively gnarled, sinuous character with smooth bark.

Landscape Use

Crape myrtle is one of our most versatile landscape plants for sunny locations. They are available for use as medium trees, small trees, shrubs, groundcovers, container plants, large perennial bedding plants and hanging baskets. However, the most commonly available cultivars are best used as small trees in Florida.

For best results and minimum maintenance, choose a cultivar whose growth characteristics and ultimate size fit your intended landscape use. Misplacement of a shrub- or tree-like crape myrtle will require you to prune it constantly to keep it from outgrowing its place. Single- or multi-stemmed tree-form crape myrtles are ideal as flowering specimen trees or as small, flowering shade trees near patios, walkways, and entrances. Shrub forms make an excellent accent in a shrub border when planted in groups. Dwarf plants are effective as large groundcovers, perennial bedding plants, or container plants providing vivid, summer-flowering interest. Some dwarf crape myrtles are used in hanging baskets.

Background plantings of evergreens emphasize the floral display of crape myrtles. Dark colored mulches or dark green groundcovers highlight the ornamental characteristics of crape myrtle trunks and bark.

General Culture

Crape myrtle is adapted to climatic conditions throughout Florida. Well-established plants are extremely drought tolerant and have low fertility requirements, although they respond to fertilizer and water with lush growth. Crape myrtle has low salt tolerance, so it should not be irrigated with saline water or used near the coast unless it is well-protected from saline conditions.

Full sun is necessary for best flowering and for development of a full, symmetrical crown. Crape myrtle is tolerant of a wide range of soil types but grows poorly in wet soils. It is best adapted to loamy soils that are slightly acid (pH 5.0 to 6.5). Species and cultivars susceptible to powdery mildew should be placed in locations that allow air movement to help avoid potential problems with this unsightly disease.

Crape myrtle transplants easily. Best results occur if container-grown crape myrtles are planted during early summer when in active growth. Bare root or balled-and-burlapped crape myrtles should be moved and planted while dormant. Plants should be mulched to a depth of 3 inches.

Newly planted crape myrtle should be irrigated regularly for the first few weeks to aid in establishment. Trees with a trunk diameter greater than 1 inch benefit from regular irrigation for several months. Crape myrtle is very drought tolerant once established but moist soil or irrigation promotes growth. Fertilization will stimulate growth of young crape myrtles but established crape myrtles usually do not need fertilizer because root systems extend into lawns where they can absorb nutrients from applications of lawn fertilizers.

Young crape myrtles characteristically develop multiple stems. If a crape myrtle is to be grown as a small tree, the smallest stems should be removed,

leaving one main stem for a single-trunk specimen or 3 to 5 main stems for a multi-trunked tree.

Crape myrtle generally requires little pruning. "Suckers" or water sprouts may develop along the lower portions of main stems or from roots. These should be removed when using crape myrtles as trees. Small twiggy growth on disease-susceptible shrub and tree forms should be thinned out from underneath and within the canopy. This keeps the trunk clean to allow air circulation and help prevent powdery mildew disease. Dwarf crape myrtles periodically grow tall shoots that must be removed to maintain the planting as a groundcover. Shoots of some dwarf cultivars occasionally die to the ground over winter, and dead wood should be removed in the spring.

If pruning is necessary to improve plant shape or form, prune crape myrtle anytime after the leaves have fallen. However if plants are pruned too early in the fall, new growth may emerge and be killed by the first freeze. Plants are easy to prune while dormant since the branch structure is readily visible without foliage. Pruning while plants are dormant also will not interfere with flower bud formation since crape myrtle flowers form on new growth. Avoid annual or frequent hard pruning. Severe pruning can induce excess vegetative growth, basal sprouting, and fewer, but larger, flower panicles. It also spoils the beautiful winter branch structure on crape myrtle trees.

Tip pruning to remove old flower clusters will promote recurrent blooming but is not practical for large plants or low maintenance landscapes. Tip pruning is largely unnecessary on many newer cultivars that naturally repeat-bloom, but tip pruning may enhance recurrent bloom of older *L. indica* cultivars.

Pests

Crape myrtle can be one of the most pest-free landscape plants with proper cultivar selection and with proper siting. Primary pests in Florida are powdery mildew and the crape myrtle aphid with its associated sooty mold.

Powdery mildew is caused by the fungus *Erysiphe lagerstroemiae*. It first appears on new shoots as a whitish powder that later spreads to the

surface of leaves, stems, and flowers (a black powder on leaves is caused by sooty mold; see the section on "crapemyrtle aphid"). Powdery mildew causes leaves, stems and flowers to become distorted and stunted. In severe cases, leaves may drop prematurely and flower buds may fail to open properly. Shady, humid locations and cool nights encourage powdery mildew as does frequent wetting of the foliage by irrigation or rainfall. Powdery mildew is more prevalent in spring and fall.

The best way to avoid powdery mildew is to plant one of the cultivars bred and selected for resistance to powdery mildew (See Table 1). Additionally, crape myrtle should be planted in sunny locations allowing free air movement so that wet foliage dries quickly.

Crapemyrtle aphid, *Tinocallis*

kahawaluokalani, was apparently introduced into the United States with crape myrtle, its host plant. Crapemyrtle aphids are pale yellow in color with winged adults having black wings and black protuberances. They primarily are found on undersides of leaves and are particularly attracted to new growth. Crapemyrtle aphid is not found on any other commonly grown plant. No aphid species other than crapemyrtle aphid infest crape myrtle.

These insects damage crape myrtle by inserting mouthparts into soft tissue and extracting plant sap. Crapemyrtle aphids can reproduce and develop large numbers rapidly. Heavy infestations distort leaves and stunt new growth.

In north Florida, crapemyrtle aphid populations generally peak between late June and early August. Crape myrtles should be inspected regularly during this period to monitor populations of aphids. Aphid populations can probably be managed if control measures begin by the first week of July. Elsewhere in Florida, one or more population peaks may occur at any time between May and September. Although many predatory insects feed on crapemyrtle aphids, they usually cannot control the aphids. Sprays of insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils are the most environmentally safe pesticides for controlling crapemyrtle aphids.

During feeding, aphids secrete droplets of a sugary solution called "honeydew." Drops of honeydew fall from the aphids onto leaves and stems below. This sugary solution promotes the growth of sooty mold fungi, *Capnodium* species. Sooty mold appears as a black staining or powdery coating on leaves and stems (a whitish powder on leaves is symptomatic of powdery mildew; see "powdery mildew"). The blackened leaves and stems are often the most obvious sign of aphid infestation.

Although unsightly, sooty mold itself does not directly harm crape myrtle. However, the black fungus shades the leaves and interferes with photosynthesis, potentially reducing the long-term vigor of the plant. Control of crape myrtle aphid will halt further development of sooty mold. Existing sooty mold on leaves will wear off the leaves through the actions of sun, rain, and wind. Sprays of insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils for control of crape myrtle aphid also help to loosen and remove sooty mold.

Secondary pests of crape myrtle include metallic flea beetle (*Altica* species), Florida wax scale (*Ceroplastes floridensis*), Cercospora leafspot (*Cercospora lythracearum*) and mushroom root rot (*Armillaria tabescens*).

Propagation

Crape myrtle can be propagated vegetatively by softwood, semi-hardwood, hardwood, or root cuttings. Softwood and semi-hardwood cuttings root easily when taken in spring or summer. Hardwood cuttings from dormant plants also root easily, although use of rooting hormone improves rooting percentages. Root cuttings may be dug in early spring and planted in the greenhouse. Root cuttings root inconsistently.

Seed capsules ripening in the fall may be collected, dried, and stored in sealed containers. No seed pre-treatment is necessary and seeds will germinate within 3 weeks after sowing. Best growth results when seeds are sown during the lengthening days of spring. Flower, bark and growth characteristics of crape myrtle seedlings vary tremendously.

Cultivars

Many cultivars of crape myrtle have been developed by private individuals, nurseries and public institutions. In 1962, the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington D.C. began a crape myrtle breeding project with *Lagerstroemia indica*. Major advances occurred when *L. subcostata* and *L. fauriei* were introduced into the breeding program in 1966. The resulting hybrids were highly ornamental and resistant to powdery mildew. As a result of the late Dr. Donald Egolf's efforts, the U.S. National Arboretum has released over 24 selected for cold hardiness, for resistance to powdery mildew, and for varying heights, habits, flower colors, fall foliage colors, and bark characteristics. All U.S. National Arboretum cultivars have Native American names.

The U.S. National Arboretum is continuing Dr. Egolf's work, and many other individuals also have joined the ranks of crape myrtle breeders. Dr. Carl Whitcomb, Dr. Michael Dirr and Dr. Cecil Pounders currently operate prominent crape myrtle breeding programs. Evaluations of these and other cultivars are under way at the University of Florida/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Quincy to determine the best cultivars for Florida conditions. Cultivar descriptions and observations from these crape myrtle cultivar evaluations are listed in Table 1.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
DWARF (height less than 4 feet after 5 years)					
Bourbon Street	Rose pink	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Fair	Patented
Chica [®] Pink	Medium pink	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Poor	
Chica [®] Red	Fuschia red	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Poor	Poor vigor
Chickasaw	Pink lavender	Nondescript tan	Compact-mounded	Unknown	Plant grows into a mounded "cushion" shape; hybrid parentage should make it disease resistant; later blooming than other dwarfs
Chisam Fire	Red	Nondescript tan	Upright	Unknown	
Creole	Watermelon red	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Unknown	
Delta Blush	Light pink	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Poor	Early flowering; patented
Houston	Watermelon red	Nondescript tan	Mounded	Fair	Leaves are very small, making the plant fine-textured; patented; sibling of Orlando and Sacramento
Lafayette	Blush lavender	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Poor	Patented
Mardi Gras	Purple	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Unknown	
New Orleans	Deep purple	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Fair	Rich purple flowers and glossy foliage; patented
Orlando	Lavender purple	Nondescript tan	Mounded	Fair	Leaves are small, making the plant fine-textured; patented; larger growing than siblings Houston and Sacramento
Ozark Spring	Light lavender	Nondescript tan	Upright	Poor	
Petite Embers [™]	Red	Nondescript tan	Upright	Fair	
Petite Orchid [™]	Dark lavender	Nondescript tan	Upright	Fair	
Petite Pinkie [™]	Medium pink	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Fair	
Petite Plum [®]	Purple	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Fair	Good purple flower color

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Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Petite Red Imp TM	True red	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Fair	Good red flower color
Pink Blush	Light pink	Nondescript tan	Mounded	Fair	Leaves are very small, making the plant fine-textured; patented
Pixie White	White	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Poor	Patented
Pocomoke	Deep rose pink	Nondescript tan	Compact-mounded	Unknown	Plant grows into a mounded "cushion" shape; hybrid parentage should make it disease resistant
Purple Velvet	Dark purple	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Unknown	
Sacramento	Rose pink	Nondescript tan	Mounded	Fair	Leaves are very small, making the plant fine-textured with almost a weeping habit of growth; patented; sibling of Houston and Orlando
Snowbaby	White	Nondescript tan	Upright-rounded	Poor	Occasionally a branch will revert and produce lavender flowers
Tightwad Red [®]	True red	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Unknown	Good red flower color; patented
Velma's Royal Delight	Magenta purple	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Poor	Great flower color
Victor	Red	Nondescript tan	Upright	Fair	Great red flower color
World's Fair	Red	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Unknown	
SEMI-DWARF (height less than 12 feet after 10 years)					
Acoma	White	Creamy beige	Spreading, pendulous	Excellent	Outstanding hybrid! Distinctive horizontal branching; fine-textured, grey-green foliage; attractive bark; graceful appearance as plant matures
Baton Rouge	Deep rose red	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Very Poor	Originally called a "dwarf" but outgrew this category in Florida; patented
Bayou Marie	Pink	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Poor	Originally called a "dwarf" but outgrew this category in Florida; patented
Blizzard	White	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Fair	

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Caddo	"Bubble-gum" pink	Medium orange brown	Spreading	Good	Beautiful, unusual flower color on this hybrid; supposedly more difficult to root
Centennial	Purple	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Unknown	
Cheyenne	Bright red	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown, should be good	New hybrid cultivar from the U.S. National Arboretum; this should be a good, disease-resistant, red-flowering crape myrtle in this size category
Conestoga	Light lavender	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Poor	From U.S. National Arboretum, but not a hybrid
Cordon Bleu	Lavender	Nondescript tan	Upright-rounded	Very Poor	Originally called a "dwarf" but outgrew this category in Florida; patented
Hope	Blush-white	Nondescript tan	Open, elliptical	Excellent	Appears "stiff"
Low Flame	Pinkish red	Nondescript tan	Upright rounded	Fair	
Majestic Orchid	Purple	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown	Hybrid of <i>L. indica</i> with <i>L. speciosa</i> ; flowers and leaves are large; not stem hardy in north Florida
Pecos	Medium pink	Rich, dark brown	Vase-shaped	Excellent	Early flowering hybrid
Petite Snow TM	White	Nondescript tan	Open, rounded	Fair	Originally called a "dwarf" but outgrew this category in Florida
Pink Ruffles	Medium pink	Beige	Rounded	Fair	
Powhatan	Medium purple	Light brown	Upright but broad	Fair	From U.S. National Arboretum but not a hybrid
Prairie Lace	Medium pink edged with white	Nondescript tan	Compact upright	Fair	Lacy, bicolor flowers are beautiful close-up but fade to a blurry pink at a distance; patented
Royalty	Royal purple	Nondescript tan	Upright-rounded	Very Poor	Good purple flower color, but plant is very susceptible to powdery mildew; originally called a "dwarf" but outgrew this category in Florida

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Tonto	Fuschia red	Light brown	Rounded	Good	From the U.S. National Arboretum; prior to the releases of Arapaho and Cheyenne, this was the best disease-resistant hybrid "red;" more difficult to root
White Chocolate	White	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Unknown	New growth is burgundy darkening to brown-green; small white flowers contrast nicely with foliage
Zuni	Medium lavender	Whitish beige	Rounded	Fair	Hybrid plant; glossy foliage; appears "stiff"
INTERMEDIATE (height less than 20 feet after 10 years)					
Apalachee	Light lavender	Cinnamon orange	Upright	Good	Outstanding hybrid! Dark green leaves; dense canopy; excellent bark color; flowers are faintly fragrant; panicles of seed capsules are attractive in winter
Burgundy Cotton™	White	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown	New growth is wine colored; turning red-green and finally green when flowering; broad habit; patented
Candycane	Medium pink edged with white	Nondescript tan	Upright	Fair	Lacy, bicolor flowers are beautiful close-up, but fade to a blurry pink at a distance
Catawba	Violet purple	Nondescript tan	Broad	Fair	Best purple flower color; from U.S. National Arboretum but not a hybrid
Centennial Spirit	Dark red	Beige	Stiffly upright	Good	Good red flower color; "stiff" plant; patented
Christiana	Deep red	Nondescript tan	Upright-rounded	Good	Great red flowers!
Comanche	Coral pink	Sandalwood	Upright-rounded	Excellent	Unusual flower color on this hybrid; new leaves are tinged red-bronze.
Country Red	Dark red	Beige	Upright-rounded	Fair	
Firebird	Dark hot pink	Nondescript tan	Spreading	Fair	

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Hopi	Medium pink	Warm beige	Broad-rounded	Good	Excellent hybrid cultivar; originally called "semi-dwarf" but outgrew this category in Florida
Lipan	Reddish lavender	Whitish	Upright	Excellent	Unusual flower color on this hybrid
Near East	Soft pink	Tan	Open, spreading	Excellent	Very old cultivar; beautiful flower color; very loose, irregular habit of growth makes it hard to prune and grow
Osage	Medium pink	Dark orange	Rounded to pendulous (when in bloom)	Excellent	Excellent bark; large, compound flower panicles; glossy foliage; hybrid
Osage Blush	Light pink	Dark orange	Rounded to pendulous (when in bloom)	Excellent	Light, pink-flowered sport of the hybrid 'Osage' discovered by John Davy (Pensacola area, Florida); otherwise the same
Peppermint Lace	Pink edged with white	Nondescript tan	Upright-rounded	Unknown	Patented
Pink Lace	Medium pink	Beige	Rounded	Fair	
Pink Velour [®]	Hot pink	Nondescript tan	Upright	Unknown	New foliage is deep burgundy-red, adding a new dimension in ornamental value; patented; formerly called "Royal Velvet"
Raspberry Sundae [®]	Dark pink edged with white	Nondescript tan	Strongly upright	Poor	Bicolor flowers fade to pink in Florida's conditions; new growth is burgundy; patented
Regal Red	Red	Nondescript tan	Upright	Poor	
Sarah's Favorite	White	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown, should be good	Hybrid cultivar known for cold hardiness
Seminole	Medium pink	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Fair	Long flowering period; from U.S. National Arboretum but not a hybrid
Siren Red [™]	Dark red	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown	Good red flower color; patented

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Sioux	Clear medium pink	Medium grey brown	Narrowly upright	Excellent	Beautiful flowers; good red fall color; narrow habit makes it a great plant for tight spaces; hybrid
Splash of Pink	Mix of white, pink and bicolor flowers	Nondescript tan	Rounded	Fair	Unique flowers are beautiful close-up, but fade to a blurry pink at a distance
Wm. Toovey	Pink red	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown	Introduced in 1927
Yuma	Light lavender	Pinkish-cream	Open, rounded	Excellent	Resembles northern Lilac when in bloom; great bark; loose, irregular growth habit makes it hard to prune and grow; hybrid
TREE (height greater than 20 feet after 10 years)					
Arapaho	Dark red	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown, should be good	New hybrid cultivar from the U.S. National Arboretum; this should be the best disease-resistant red-flowering crape myrtle
Basham's Party Pink	Lavender pink	Creamy beige	Rounded, vase-shaped	Good	Very similar to 'Muskogee'; hybrid, but not from the U.S. National Arboretum
Biloxi	Light pink	Rich, dark brown	Open, vase-shaped	Good	Open canopy casts light shade and may allow grass to grow beneath; great bark; hybrid
Byers Wonderful White	White	Light beige	Upright	Fair	Huge, loose panicles of flowers as large as basketballs
Carolina Beauty	Deep red	Nondescript tan	Upright	Very poor	Good red flower color, but plant is extremely susceptible to pests
Choctaw	Light pink	Warm, light brown	Rounded	Good	Beautiful, large panicles of bright, clear pink flowers on this hybrid
Dallas Red	Dark red	Nondescript tan	Upright, rounded with age	Fair	
Dynamite [®]	True red	Light beige	Upright-rounded	Unknown	Best red flower color yet! Some flowers fade under Florida conditions; patented

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Fantasy	White	Red-orange	Vase-shaped	Excellent	Outstanding bark; early flowering; grows to medium-size tree; difficult to root; a cultivar of <i>Lagerstroemia fauriei</i>
Glendora White	White	Too soon to tell	Too soon to tell	Unknown	Pure white flowers
Kiowa	White	Cinnamon brown	Vase-shaped	Excellent	Outstanding bark; early flowering; grows to medium-size tree; difficult to root; a cultivar of <i>Lagerstroemia fauriei</i>
Miami	Dark pink	Chestnut brown	Rounded, vase-shaped	Excellent	Good orange fall color; hybrid
Muskogee	Lavender-pink	Sandalwood	Rounded	Good	Fast-growing; great orange fall color; widely planted hybrid and perhaps overplanted
Natchez	White	Rich, cinnamon brown	Rounded	Excellent	Starts flowering early and blooms well all summer; great bark; good red fall color; outstanding hybrid but overplanted
Potomac	Medium pink	Beige	Upright	Fair	Leaves out early and is susceptible to late frosts; from U.S. National Arboretum but not a hybrid
Red Rocket [®]	Cherry red	Nondescript tan	Upright-rounded	Unknown	Good red flower color; patented
Townhouse	White	Mahogany red	Vase-shaped	Excellent	Outstanding bark; grows to medium-size tree; broader habit than 'Fantasy'; difficult to root; a cultivar of <i>Lagerstroemia fauriei</i> from the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh, NC
Tuscarora	Dark coral pink	Nondescript tan	Upright	Excellent	Unusual flower color on this hybrid; plant appears "stiff"
Tuskegee	Dark pink	Creamy beige	Vase-shaped	Excellent	Fast-growing

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected *Lagerstroemia* Cultivars (plants are *Lagerstroemia indica* unless otherwise indicated).

Cultivar	Flower Color	Bark Color ¹	Habit ¹	Powdery Mildew Resistance ¹	Comments ¹
Twilight	Dark purple	Nondescript tan	Upright	Good	Good purple flower color; good orange fall color
Watermelon Red	Watermelon red/pink	Creamy beige	Spreading	Fair	Old cultivar
Wichita	Lavender	Rich brown	Upright-vase	Excellent	Hybrid cultivar from the U.S. National Arboretum

¹ Bark color, habit, powdery mildew resistance and comments from author's personal observations.