UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

ENH-500
doi.org/10.32473/EDIS-ST341-1993

Lagerstroemia fauriei: Japanese Crapemyrtle[1]

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson[2]

https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/

Introduction

Japanese Crape-Myrtle is very similar to the more common Crape-Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) except it has smaller, white blossoms and larger leaves which show no appreciable fall color change. It is also larger in size than the common Crape-Myrtle. Japanese Crape-Myrtle is a slow-growing, deciduous tree which reaches 35 to 50 feet in height and has leathery, four-inch-long leaves. The flaking, peeling, red and brown bark (on trees trained as single or multi-trunked) is especially attractive in the winter garden, when the leaves have fallen. With lower branches removed, as is often the case with Crape-Myrtle, bark is also very showy during the entire year. The upright, vase-shaped crown makes Japanese Crape-Myrtle well-suited for street tree planting.

General Information

Scientific name: *Lagerstroemia fauriei*

Pronunciation: lay-ger-STREE-mee-uh FAR-ee-eye

Common name(s): Japanese Crapemyrtle

Family: *Lythraceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 10A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: shade; street without sidewalk; specimen; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median; container or planter

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Lagerstroemia fauriei*: Japanese Crapemyrtle
Credit: Ed Gilman

Description

Height: 35 to 50 feet

Spread: 25 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: vase

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

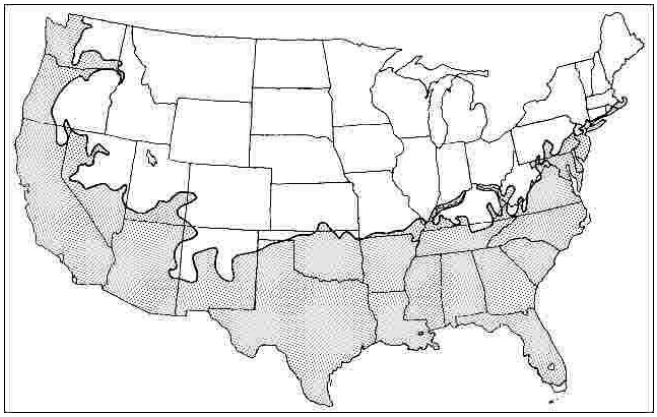

Figure 2. Range

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval), obovate, oblong

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy



Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: very showy

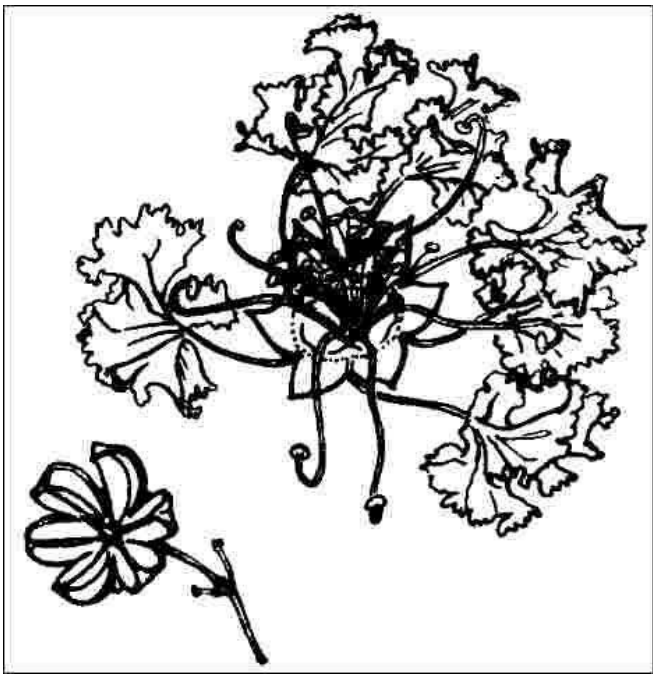

Figure 4. Flower

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; very showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green, brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: yes

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

Pruning should be done in late winter or early in the spring before growth begins because it is easier to see which branches require pruning. New growth can be pinched during the growing season, when the tree is very small, to increase branchiness and flower number but this is not needed to develop good form. The tree flowers very nicely without pruning. Lower branches are often thinned to show off the trunk form and color. You can remove the spent flower heads to encourage a second flush of flowers and to prevent formation of the brown fruits.

Japanese Crape-Myrtle would make a wonderful street tree for residential or commercial landscapes. Planted on 20-foot-centers, it would form a canopy over the sidewalk but the crown does not spread enough to canopy the street. Choose single-trunked trees for street planting, or well-formed, multi-trunked specimens with no embedded bark. The outstanding bark character makes it one of the best specimen trees for the South. This is likely to become a very popular tree.

Japanese Crape-Myrtle grows best in full sun with rich, moist soil but will tolerate less hospitable positions in the landscape just as well, once it becomes established. It will probably grow well in limited soil spaces in urban areas such as along boulevards and in parking lots.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed.

The cultivar `Fantasy' will become more available, 50 feet tall, white flowers, extremely showy flower display even on old trees, three-foot diameter trunk 35 years after planting, resistant to powdery mildew.

Pests

No pests are of major concern. Aphids probably infest the new growth to a certain extent causing a harmless but unsightly sooty mold to grow on the foliage.

Diseases

Although powdery mildew can severely affect most other Crape-Myrtles, Japanese Crape-Myrtle is very resistant.

[1] This document is ENH-500, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication. © UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/.*

[2] Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus, UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, UF/IFAS Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that operate in compliance with applicable federal and state non-discrimination laws and policies. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Andra Johnson, Dean for UF/IFAS Extension.