

Prunus cerasifera 'Newportii': Newport Cherry Plum¹

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Introduction

Growing 15 feet high and wide, Newport Cherry Plum forms a rounded silhouette of dark purple foliage. The new leaves unfold as light bronze-purple but quickly change to red or red-purple. 'Newport' Cherry Plum has pale bluish-pink springtime flowers which are followed by one-inch-diameter, dull purple fruits. It is said to be one of the hardiest purple-leaved plums but is also quite common throughout the South.

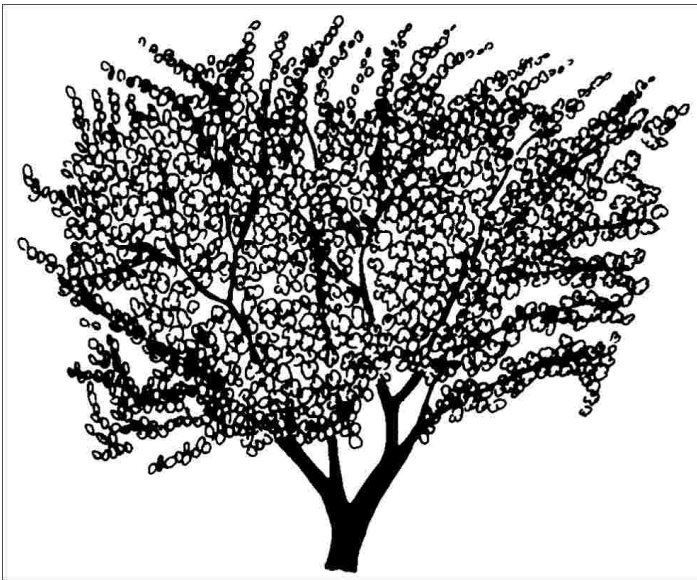


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Prunus cerasifera* 'Newportii': Newport Cherry Plum

General Information

Scientific name: *Prunus cerasifera*

Pronunciation: PROO-nus sair-uh-SIFF-er-uh

Common name(s): Newport Cherry Plum, Newport Purple-Leaf Plum

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 4B through 7B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: specimen; container or planter; Bonsai; shade

Availability: not native to North America



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 15 to 18 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

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Crown uniformity: symmetrical
Crown shape: round, vase
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: ovate, elliptic (oval), obovate
Leaf venation: pinnate, brachidodrome
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: purple/red
Fall color: purple
Fall characteristic: showy



Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray, pink
Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: purple
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: reddish, 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: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Very popular due to the unusual leaf color, many gardeners want one of these things in their yard. But one plant really attracts attention to an area, and it can be overpowering in a small landscape creating a cramped feeling. Due to the strong effect, best used in a large-scale landscape as a single specimen, not in a row or mass planting. It makes a nice, small ornamental near the deck or patio but locate it far enough away so dropping fruit will fall on the lawn or in a groundcover bed. It is often short-lived.

'Newport' Cherry Plum should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid soil to bring out the richest leaf color. It tolerates slightly alkaline soil. Tolerant of moderate heat and drought, it often succumbs to borers on poor, compacted soil.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

This Cherry Plum is susceptible to aphids, borers, scales, mealy bugs, and tent caterpillars.

Diseases

Canker and leaf spots may infect this tree.