'Caddo' and 'Tonto' *Lagerstroemia*

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'Caddo' and 'Tonto' are mildew-resistant, semi-dwarf *Lagerstroemia indica* L. $\times$ *L. fauriei* Koehne cultivars with bright pink and dark fuchsia flowers. *Lagerstroemia*, commonly known as crape-myrtle, has been cultivated widely throughout the southern United States since colonial times for its brilliant summer bloom. The early crape-myrtle (*L. indica*) cultivars were small trees or large shrubs that were very susceptible to mildew. Recently, the U.S. National Arboretum *Lagerstroemia* breeding program has introduced seventeen mildew resistant *L. indica* $\times$ *L. fauriei* cultivars that have tree (7 to 10 m high), intermediate (4 to 6 m high), and semi-dwarf (1.5 to 3.5 m high) growth habits, a range of flower colors, and an array of trunk colors. 'Muskogee' (NA 38448), 'Natchez' (NA 38449; Egolf, 1981), 'Tuscarora' (NA 41787; Egolf, 1981), 'Tuskegee' (NA 48471; Egolf, 1986), 'Biloxi' (NA 54974), 'Miami' (NA 52714), and 'Wichita' (NA 54973; Egolf, 1987) are the tree types. The six intermediate cultivars are 'Apalachee' (NA 54879), 'Comanche' (NA 54976), 'Lipan' (NA 54978), 'Osage' (NA 54980), 'Sioux' (NA 54971), and 'Yuma' (NA 54975; Egolf, 1987). The four semi-dwarf cultivars are 'Acoma' (NA 48472), 'Hopi' (NA 52711), 'Pecos' (NA 54977), and 'Zuni' (NA 54982; Egolf, 1986). 'Caddo' and 'Tonto' extend the landscape attributes and raise the total U.S. National Arboretum *Lagerstroemia* (*indica* $\times$ *fauriei*) cultivar releases to nineteen.

Origin

From the initial hybridization in 1965 of *L. indica* $\times$ *L. fauriei* (*Eysiphe lagerstroemiae* E. West), mildew-resistant progeny were selected for further evaluation. A backcross made in 1971 of *L. (indica* $\times$ *fauriei*) 'Basham's Party Pink' $\times$ *L. indica* 'Cherokee' yielded a low, wide-spreading, semi-dwarf plant with pale lavender flowers. Open-pollinated seed from this plant produced many plants with reduced height but few with mildew resistance. One seedling with low-spreading growth habit and bright pink flowers has been designated as the cultivar Caddo.

From the initial cross of *L. indica* $\times$ *L. fauriei*, progeny were selected for further

hybridization in an attempt to intensify flower color and mildew resistance, and to refine the dwarf-growth habit. A cross made in 1974 of [*L. indica* 'Pink Lace' $\times$ *L. fauriei*] $\times$ *L. indica* 'Catwaba'] $\times$ *L. indica* 'Tuscarora' produced seedlings with deeper-pigmented flowers. One seedling selection with compact growth habit and deep fuchsia flowers has been designated as the cultivar Tonto.

Description

Lagerstroemia (indica $\times$ *fauriei*) 'Caddo', n. cv., NA 54962, PI 534642, is a deciduous, low-spreading, semi-dwarf, multi-stemmed shrub that has grown 2.5 m high and 2.5 m wide in 18 years (Fig. 1). The four-striate young shoots are red-purple (Red Purple 59A) (Royal Hort. Soc., 1982?) above with a lighter tinge of red (Greyed-Red 186C) beneath. The young branches are grey-brown (Greyed-Orange 166D) before turning light cinnamon brown (Greyed-Orange 166C) due to exposure by the exfoliating bark of the older branches and trunk. The young, faintly red-tinged leaves become semi-glossy, glabrous, subcoriaceous, dark green (Yellow-Green 147A above and Green 137C beneath), elliptic to obovate, acute at the apex, obtuse to cuneate at the base, 3.3 to 5.5 cm long, and 2.2 to 3.7 cm wide, with a 2- to 4-mm-long petiole. In the fall, the leaves turn bright orange-red (Orange-Red 34A to Red 46A). The ovate panicles are 9 to 25 cm long, 7.5 to 17 cm wide, with 50 to 200

bright pink (Red Purple 63C) florets, each 2.2 to 3.0 cm in diameter, with long-clawed, crinkled petals, 12 to 15 mm long, 8 to 10 mm wide, and bloom from mid-July to September (Fig. 2).

Lagerstroemia (indica $\times$ *fauriei*) 'Tonto', n. cv., NA 54972, PI 534644, is a deciduous, globose, semi-dwarf, multi-stemmed shrub that has grown 2.5 m high and 2.5 m wide in 15 years (Fig. 3). The young branches are four-striate, red-purple (Greyed-Purple 184B) above and tinged a lighter red purple (Greyed-Purple 185D) beneath. The medium brown (Greyed-Orange 177B) branches and trunk at maturity exfoliate the bark to reveal cream (Yellow-Orange 20D) to taupe (Grey-Brown 199B) coloration beneath. The young dark bronze- (Greyed-Purple 184C) tinted leaves become dark green (Yellow Green 147A above and Yellow Green 146B beneath) semi-glossy, glabrous, and subcoriaceous and are elliptic to obovate, acute to acuminate at the apex, cuneate at the base, 4.5 to 5.3 cm long and 2.0 to 2.8 cm wide, with a 1- to 2-mm-long petiole. The foliage turns bright maroon (Greyed-Red 199A to Greyed-Red 180A) in the autumn. The upright, globose panicles are 10 to 21 cm long, 8 to 13 cm wide, with 50 to 300 fuchsia (Red Purple 61B) florets, each 3.5 to 4.0 cm in diameter, with long-clawed, crinkled petals 1.5 to 1.8 cm long and 1.0 to 1.3 cm wide, which bloom from mid-July to September (Fig. 4).

'Caddo' and 'Tonto' develop into low-spreading mounds < 2 m high during the first 5 to 10 years, and at maturity can be expected to remain < 3 m high. With age, 'Tonto' becomes more upright, while 'Caddo' has wider-spreading horizontal branches. The semi-dwarf cultivars maintain a compact growth habit, but limited annual dormant pruning readily restricts plant size.

'Caddo' and 'Tonto' have not been cold-damaged at Washington, D.C. (USDA zone 7b) (USDA, 1990), and have withstood

Fig. 1. Compact growth habit and profuse flowering of 'Caddo' crape-myrtle.

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Fig. 2. Globose, bright pink panicles of 'Caddo' crape-myrtle.

Fig. 3. Multi-stemmed, semi-dwarf growth habit of 'Tonto' crape-myrtle.

– 23C when other *L. indica* cultivars have been severely cold-injured.

Crape-myrtle cultivar introductions are named after American Indian tribes to designate them as American and as originating from the National Arboretum *Lagerstroemia* breeding project. The Caddo tribe settled in Louisiana and spread into Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma. The Tonto tribe is located in Arizona. The cultivar names 'Caddo' and 'Tonto' have been registered with the U.S. National Arboretum, the International Registration Authority for cultivated *Lagerstroemia*, in accordance with the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants–1980* (Brickell, 1980). Herbarium specimens and photographs are on deposit in the U.S. National Arboretum Herbarium.

Culture

'Caddo' and 'Tonto' are plants adaptable to a wide range of climatic and soil conditions, but grow best in full sun, abundant moisture, and a soil that is a heavy loam to clay texture, with a pH of 5.0 to 6.5. These cultivars may be cultivated throughout the southern United States under growth conditions similar to those for *L. indica*. The preferred propagation technique is softwood cuttings placed under interrupted mist. Plants also can be increased readily by hardwood or root cuttings. Because of the compact growth habit, these plants are especially well-suited for container production and will flower profusely by the second season. Plants can be grown readily in nursery rows as young bare rootstock or as mature balled and burlapped specimen plants. As with all crape-myrtles, the best transplanting time is late spring and summer, when the plant is actively growing, rather than when it is dormant.

Outstanding characteristics and uses

The reduced stature of 'Caddo' and 'Tonto' is in scale for residential gardens, landscapes with restricted areas, and container plants for patios or paved public areas. The mildew-resistant foliage eliminates costly spray applications and ensures attractive foliage and abundant flowering. Minimal pruning will maintain smaller plants, or an annual heavy dormant pruning for an informal hedge. The flower inflorescences tend to be smaller than in the larger growing cultivars, but increased shoot growth throughout the summer consistently initiates flower buds to maintain persistent, recurrent bloom. As container plants, these densely branched cultivars can be maintained as compact mounds or trimmed into small trees with sinuate exfoliating trunks. 'Caddo' and 'Tonto' are adaptable as foundation, specimen border plants, informal hedges in the residential landscape, and mass plantings in parks and public areas.

Availability

The U.S. National Arboretum releases 'Caddo' and 'Tonto' but does not have stock

Fig. 4. Globose, dark red-purple panicle of 'Tonto' crape-myrtle.

of these cultivars available for general distribution. The plants increased by cooperating wholesale nurseries will be the source of plants for introduction in 1990.

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