'Lavender Lady', Flowering Ornamental *Cuphea glutinosa*

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Cuphea, a genus in the Lythraceae, includes ≈ 260 species and is native mostly from Mexico through Brazil (Graham and Kleiman, 1985). *C. glutinosa* (Chain. & Schldl.) is a native of Brazil (Graham et al., 1981). The primary interest in *Cuphea* spp. is for its seed as a source of medium chain triglycerides; however, landscape and ornamental use is an alternative for some *Cuphea* spp. (Jaworski and Phatak, 1990; Pottberg, 1984; Thompson et al., 1987).

Cuphea glutinosa selection 'Lavender Lady' has potential use as a landscape and ornamental plant for the southeastern United States. This plant is adapted only to full sun

and has winter hardiness in U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Plant Hardiness Zone 8A (Jaworski and Phatak, 1990). The plants produce a large mass of purple flowers from early April until mid-November. Natural propagation is by rooting of stoloniferous shoots, by underground stolons, and by seeds.

Origin

'Lavender Lady' was selected from 25 plants remaining out of 220 *C. glutinosa* plants grown on Dothan loamy sand (fine loamy, siliceous, thermic, Plinthic Kandudults) that survived Winter 1986-87 in Tifton, Ga. These 220 plants were produced from seeds of Arizona accession numbers A 0015, A 0172, A 0175, and A 0247, now located at Ames, Iowa. 'Lavender Lady' originated from A 0172 and was assigned Georgia number GA 21.

Description

Selection of 'Lavender Lady' was based on overwintering, superior ground cover (50-cm-diam circle within 100 days of planting), short height (12 cm 1st year), six-petal flowers, and superior number of flowers (up to 27 flowers per 100 cm²) and attractive color (Fig. 1) (Jaworski and Phatak, 1990). The maximum leaf size for 'Lavender Lady' was 2.5×1.4 cm.

Flowering in the field was from early April until the first autumn freeze, about mid-November in Tifton, Ga. Flowering was continuous through the year in the hanging baskets and in the pots under greenhouse conditions. The maximum flower petal spread was 1.6×1.8 cm, the maximum size of the four ventral petals was 0.8×0.3 cm, and the maximum size of the two dorsal petals was 0.8×0.5 cm. The ventral flower petals are purple violet (81C) (Royal Horticultural Soc., 1966) and dorsal petals are purple violet (80A). The flower petal veins are purple (77A). The leaves are very small at the base of the plant, reach maximum size before flowering, and are much smaller in the flowering portion of the shoot. 'Lavender Lady' leaves were an attractive green (137A). Stems and leaves >5 cm above the ground were usually killed by cold weather, while the stems and leaves next to the ground and which completely cover the soil remained attractive and green throughout the winter. The lowest temperature in the three winters of 1987 through 1989 was -11°C .

The adaptation of 'Lavender Lady' as per-

Fig. 1. *Cuphea glutinosa* 'Lavender Lady'.

manent plantings in commercial and residential landscape in regions colder than Tifton has yet to be evaluated. 'Lavender Lady' proliferate into a dense mat of rooted shoots that completely cover the ground, and this characteristic may add value for erosion control and beautification along highways and as potted plants.

Availability

Information for propagation of 'Lavender Lady' can be obtained by writing S.C.P. Horticulture Dept., CPES, P.O. Box 748,

Tifton, GA 31793.

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