

plant HERITAGE



NCCPG

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**PLANT
CONSERVATION
SCHEMES**
Reviewed

**CHELSEA
HIGHLIGHTS**
The Queen
and our volunteers

CYCLAMEN
In the wild
and in the garden



|| *Cyclamen purpurascens*
from the National
Collection held by Jo
Hynes, who also took
the photograph.

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From the Editor

Fifteen years ago I was given a house-warming present of pots of *Cyclamen hederifolium* grown from seed provided by John Fielding. In all shades from white to cerise and with wonderfully variegated foliage, they have exploded out of the borders and seeded themselves everywhere. The appearance of the first flowers in late August always indicates the end of summer. Cyclamen do not, however, need to be limited to the autumn. National Collection Holder Jo Hynes proves that you can have them in flower in British gardens nearly all year round. Plantsman John Fielding describes his encounters in the wild with yet more cyclamen species and how they adapt to life in west London. Belgian nursery owners Geen and Ingrid Devriese are on a mission to get us to take a chance on *Lagerstroemia*, the crape myrtles. New cultivars are proving surprisingly hardy, and provide interest all year round. Being a keen grower from seed, I was fascinated by Paul Cumbleton's "Tips, Tricks and Techniques". It does what it says on the packet. Plant Conservation Officer Mercy Morris analyses the achievements of cultivated plant conservation organisations worldwide, and Plant Heritage's pre-eminent place amongst them. She reminds us of what we're all about: the conservation of our glorious garden heritage.



|| *Hydrangea* 'Love You Kiss'



|| *Cyclamen hederifolium*,
Campanula 'Monique'



|| Magdalen Down cowslips

PUBLISHERS

Plant Heritage, 12 Home Farm, Loseley Park,
Guildford, Surrey GU3 1HS
T: 01483 447540 F:01483 458933
www.plantheritage.com
collections@plantheritage.org.uk or
info@plantheritage.org.uk

NATIONAL OFFICE

Executive Officer – Genevieve Melbourne Webb
Plant Conservation Officer – Mercy Morris
Threatened Plants Project Coordinator –
Kalani Seymour / Sophie Leguil
Membership & Conservation Administrators –
Gillian Spencer, Gill Groombridge
PR Officer – Victoria Shepherd
Fundraising Officer – Joanna Jones
Bookkeeper – Judith Wiles

EDITOR

Dr Pat Huff, Castle House, Leighton Bromswold,
Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 5AX
T: 01480 891740
pat.huff@mbmc-crawfordstreet.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Joanna Jones
For rates and bookings, call national office
joannaj@plantheritage.org.uk

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Our Contributors



Geert and Ingrid Devriese
push the boundaries at their
small family-owned nursery in
Wingene, Belgium:
www.lagerstroemia.be.



Jo Hynes, National Collection
Holder for *Cyclamen* (ex.
persicum cvs) has gardened in
Devon for the last 20 years.
Cherubeer Gardens are open
for the NGS, www.ngs.org.uk
for opening times and garden website.



John Fielding is an
horticulturist, photographer,
author, garden designer and
plant breeder; member of a
large number of societies and
on two committees of the RHS.
John has a small web site www.jfimages.co.uk
which shows a sample of some of his images.



Mercy Morris had her first
experience of National
Collections when she
looked after Wakehurst
Place's *Hypericum* collection
before joining as the Plant
Conservation Officer in 2007. In completing her
RHS Master of Horticulture, she frequently used
“work” related topics as part of her projects.



Paul Cumbleton has been
Team leader for the Alpine
section at RHS Garden Wisley
for 10 years, having previously
worked for 22 years for the
government's Agricultural
Development and Advisory Service. He has
a particular passion for *Pleione* (see www.pleione.info)
and for the winter-growing
bulbous flora of South Africa.

Lagerstroemia: eye-catching, inspirational plants

Words and images by Geert and Ingrid Dierckx.
Textual assistance from Gary Fish



1 Lagerstroemia 'Marli Cass'

Once you have seen a *Lagerstroemia* flowering, you will never forget this memorable plant. We find these plants completely overwhelming, flowering as they do for 120 days a year in Florida and at least 60 days in Belgium with flowers of white, red, purple and pink.

August 2011 in Belgium was a very wet month and we were afraid that we would not have any plants in flower, but the *Lagerstroemia* didn't disappoint us. Throughout September and well into October we had flowers of the late varieties as never before.

How did these *Lagerstroemia* arrive in Belgium? We have a small family nursery specializing in a wide variety of *Laurus nobilis* cultivars (the biggest collection in Europe). We love plants and are always searching for new varieties to inspire us. In 2002 we wanted to import some *Magnolia grandiflora* from the USA and to make it an interesting shipment we also added some *Lagerstroemia* to the order. The following summer we saw *Lagerstroemia* 'Tuscadero' flowering for the first time and it was love at first sight. That was the beginning of our involvement in collecting these plants and obtaining more information about them. In no time we had made contacts throughout the world and were learning as much as



11 'Viviana'

possible about the *Lagerstroemia*. There is much information on the internet, but we wanted always to learn and know just that little more.

Older nurserymen told us that we wouldn't find *Lagerstroemia* that would flower reliably in Belgium but were they correct? When it comes to the older and some of the Italian varieties, yes, they were. But some of the new improved American selections are much better able to cope with our Belgian climate, particularly in their greater cold hardiness and earlier flowering. I did not need to hear more and a new collection was born. We have now collected species, varieties and cultivars from all over the whole world: from nurseries, arboreta, research establishments. At this moment we have a collection of 145 different *Lagerstroemia*.

Every year we continue to search for new or better varieties, so we can say YES, *Lagerstroemia* can flower and grow well in Belgium where it is colder and wetter than France or Florida. *Lagerstroemia* as a plant is beautiful the whole year round, from winter until autumn, from spring until summer. In the winter you have beautiful bark from most varieties, in spring the plant will display fresh new growth, in the summer you will never forget the colours



11 'Paul Velez'



11 'Tuscadero'



11 Richly coloured autumn foliage

and in Autumn the leaves will amouder in tints of red, orange and yellow.

We have selected *Lagerstroemia* that do well in Belgium and termed them **Muses of Helios**.

You will find the Grape Myrtles, as they are in called the USA, suitable for small to big gardens, from 3 inches to 30 feet and higher. They ask only for good light levels and, the warmest place in the garden and dry feet in the winter.

For us this is just the beginning of a new exploration of the genus *Lagerstroemia* in Europe; new selections are being developed and will hopefully grow and flower for our pleasure. *Lagerstroemia* provides colour from July and August through to the first frost. Some varieties can survive about -12 to -15°C if you keep some ground rules in mind. In particular it is best to start with plants which are sufficiently mature enough (at least 4 years); they will be rootbaredy and can be used as perennials.

Our nursery is based near Brugge. During 2010 minimum temperatures dropped to -12°C with



1. The field

80 days during the year reaching temperatures of 0°C or less. Rain was recorded on 163 days. We believe that these plants would thus stand a good chance of thriving in many parts of the UK. Indeed flowering specimens can be found at Kew Gardens (see www.growsonyou.com/tbtkew/blog/6299-lagerstroemias-at-kew).

It is a challenge to continue fixing and developing Grape myrtles that are most suitable for our climatic zone but keep in mind that when you have the patience to wait, you will be rewarded. *Lagerstroemia* from groundcover to trees are coming to town!



1. L. Trise White

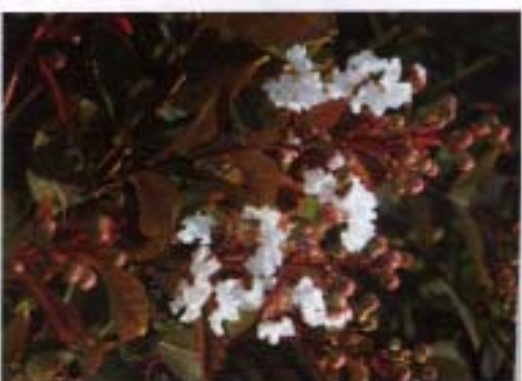


1. L. Gordon Blue

LAGERSTROEMIA "MUSES OF HELIOS": A FEW GROUND RULES

With *Lagerstroemia*, gardening becomes a real pleasure. These highly sought-after plants are much appreciated by garden-lovers.

- All *Lagerstroemia* are deciduous.
- Choose the variety best suited to you for your garden or terrace.
- Please make sure its base stays dry in winter; it is not cold weather but damp that causes most losses.
- Put the plant in the warmest and sunniest spot of your garden or terrace protected from fierce winds. The plants prefer at least 8 hours/day of summer sun for maximum flowering. Give them good drainage with an ideal pH range of 5.0 to 6.5.
- Do not over-fertilize but if necessary only in spring; we prefer an N:P:K ratio of 5:10:5.
- Watering well during the first year only to allow the plant to establish.
- Trim it after the hardest frost and never after the end of July or in the autumn. Grape Myrtles bloom on the new growth so should ideally be pruned in early spring before they break dormancy.
- No severe trimming is required in natural soil. Just some yearly clipping of the offshoots will do.
- Remember that *Lagerstroemia* takes a very long time to grow. Patience is a virtue and you will be amply rewarded.
- Should there be a long period of frost below -15°C, then it is advisable to cover or wrap the plant up at the bottom of the stem.
- Please protect young *Lagerstroemia* for at least the first 4 years during winter and ideally plant them in spring.



1. L. 'Kona'



1. L. 'Kopi'