Crape Myrtle, Tonto

Lagerstroemia 'Tonto'



Crape Myrtle, Tonto flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5b

Other Names: Crape Myrtle, Crepe Myrtle

Description:

This attractive ornamental shrub produces amazing fuchsia-red blooms in summer, followed by vibrant orange-red fall foliage; captivating focal point for the garden or border



Crape Myrtle, Tonto in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Crape Myrtle, Tonto is draped in stunning panicles of fuchsia frilly flowers with red overtones at the ends of the branches from early to late summer. It has attractive dark green deciduous foliage which emerges coppery-bronze in spring. The oval leaves are highly ornamental and turn antique red in fall.

Landscape Attributes

Crape Myrtle, Tonto is a dense multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep. Trim off the flower heads after they fade and die to encourage more blooms late into the season. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Crape Myrtle, Tonto is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Crape Myrtle, Tonto will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. This plant should be periodically fertilized throughout the active growing season with a specially-formulated acidic fertilizer. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid.

Crape Myrtle, Tonto makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.

Special Attributes

In Eastern Washington & Oregon Crape Myrtles can have die back from our winters, depending on the winter. If it is a hard winter they can die completely so in the autumn put 4 inches of bark around their base going out to a 2 foot in diameter to protect the roots from dying. Crape Myrtles are one of the last things to leaf out in the spring, generally mid to late April or early May. If you are growing it in a container, be sure to protect it from cold temperatures and winds by taking it into a garage or shed with a window, don't forget to give it water once every 2 to 3 weeks.