

Lagerstroemia 'Natchez'

Natchez Crape Myrtle



Lagerstroemia 'Natchez' (crape myrtle Natchez) is a hybrid from the National Arboretum in Washington D.C., USA. One of its parents is *Lagerstroemia fauriei*, from which seed was collected in 1956 from a mountain forest on the island of Yakushima, Japan. The other parent is *Lagerstroemia indica* 'Pink Lace'. This controlled cross-breeding was carried out in 1964 and 'Natchez' was selected from this in 1969. The tree stood out on account of its resistance to powdery mildew and splendid cinnamon brown peeling bark. In 1978, *Lagerstroemia* 'Natchez' was officially named and released for propagation. The vase-shaped multi-stem tree or large shrub grows between seven and nine metres tall and the same wide.

The magnificent, dark cinnamon-coloured stems with peeling creamy blotches are striking all year round but especially so in winter. The attractive white flower panicles with their fringed edges are also highly decorative. Bees and butterflies love them. Depending on how warm the summer is, flowers may appear as early as July and continue right on into November. The emerging glossy dark green foliage is ovate, rather leathery and displays wonderful autumn colour, ranging from yellow-orange to red. *Lagerstroemia* 'Natchez' bears dark brown capsules into late winter.

Lagerstroemia 'Natchez' is one of the hardiest crape myrtles up to winter hardiness zone 7. The tree can comfortably withstand heat and drought and tolerates a wide range of soils provided this is well-drained. 'Natchez' prefers a site in full sun. Whilst tolerant of some shade, this will affect the number of blooms. If summer temperatures are not sufficiently high enough, the wood may not ripen properly - and may freeze as a result. In which case, pruning right at the end of August may speed up the ripening process. The wide-growing *Lagerstroemia* 'Natchez' is a magnificent park and garden tree, and because it can grow in semi-paved areas also does well in more urban environments.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, solitary shrubs

USE

Location: park, central reservation, in containers, large garden, cemetery, coastal area | **Pavement:** none, open, sealed

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: wide vase-shaped | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 6 - 9 m | **Width:** 6 - 9 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 7A - 9B

ASPECTS

Wind: intolerant to wind, slightly tolerant to coastal wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** very dry, dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, butterflies | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness, tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: panicle, corymbose, striking, standing, singular | **Flower colour:** white | **Flowering period:** July - September | **Leaf colour:** dark green, buds bright green | **Leaves:** deciduous, obovate, ovoid, thick, opposite, leathery, matt polished | **Autumn colour:** yellow-orange, orange-red, scarlet | **Fruits:** discrete, capsule | **Fruit colour:** brown | **Bark colour:** cream, pale brown, cinnamon-brown, yellow-green, pale grey | **Bark:** peeling, smooth | **Twig colour:** brown | **Twigs:** thornless, bare, pendulous, finely branched | **Root system:** shallow, highly branched