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(54) **LOROPETALUM PLANT NAMED ‘LRD-02-20’**

(50) Latin Name: *Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum*
Varietal Denomination: **LRD-02-20**

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A01H 6/00 (2018.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **Plt./226**

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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Loropetalum* plant named ‘LRD-02-20’ is disclosed, characterized by its compact, mounded, spreading growth habit; dark black-purple foliage color that persists through summer and winter; dark pink (almost red) flowers in spring; and improved cold hardiness compared to other compact purple-leaf cultivars. The new variety is a *Loropetalum*, normally produced as an outdoor garden or container plant.

3 Drawing Sheets

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Latin name of the genus and species: *Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum*.
Variety denomination: ‘LRD-02-20’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum*, a member of the Hamamelidaceae family, hereinafter referred to by its cultivar name ‘LRD-02-20’. This cultivar is grown primarily as an ornamental for landscape use and for use as a potted plant.

The cultivar originated from an open-pollination of *Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum* ‘GriffCRL’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 16,615, in Watkinsville, Ga., in 2020, and was selected from the progeny by continued evaluation for growth habit, flower, and improved foliage characteristics. The cultivar ‘LRD-02-20’ originated and was discovered in a cultivated environment in an outdoor nursery in Watkinsville, Ga.

‘LRD-02-20’ has been asexually reproduced by softwood cuttings since 2020 in Watkinsville, Ga. The characteristics of the cultivar have been stable and reproduced true to type in successive vegetative generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

‘LRD-02-20’ has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with changes in light, temperature, soil and rainfall without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been observed and represent the characteristics of the new cultivar. In combination, these characteristics distinguish ‘LRD-02-20’ from all other varieties in commerce known to the inventor:

1. Compact, mounded, spreading growth habit.
2. Lustrous dark black-purple foliage color that persists through summer and winter.

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3. Dark pink (close to red) flowers in spring.
4. Improved cold hardiness compared to other compact, purple-leaf cultivars.

PARENT COMPARISON

Plants of the new cultivar ‘LRD-02-20’ are comparable to the seed parent in most horticultural characteristics. However, the new variety ‘LRD-02-20’ differs in the following:

1. ‘LRD-02-20’ has a compact mounded, spreading growth habit, whereas ‘GriffCRL’ has an overall larger, rounded growth habit.
2. ‘LRD-02-20’ has dark purple foliage that persists through summer and winter, whereas ‘GriffCRL’ has duller red-purple foliage that will become greenish purple in summer and winter.
3. ‘LRD-02-20’ has dark pink flowers, whereas ‘GriffCRL’ has light pink flowers.

COMMERCIAL COMPARISONS

Plants of the new cultivar ‘LRD-02-20’ are comparable to the patented, commercial variety *Loropetalum* ‘PIILC-I’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 25,534. The two *Loropetalum* varieties are similar in most horticultural characteristics; however, the new variety ‘LRD-02-20’ differs in the following:

1. ‘LRD-02-20’ has dark purple foliage, whereas ‘PIILC-I’ has rich reddish-purple foliage that is mounding.
2. ‘LRD-02-20’ has dark pink flowers, whereas ‘PIILC-I’ has bright pink flowers.

Plants of the new cultivar ‘LRD-02-20’ are comparable to the patented, commercial variety *Loropetalum* ‘PIILC-III’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 25,471. The two *Loropetalum* varieties are similar in most horticultural characteristics; however, the new variety ‘LRD-02-20’ differs in the following:

1. 'LRD-02-20' has foliage that is dark black-purple with a dark pink (close to red) flower. 'PIILC-III' has foliage that is dark purplish grey and a moderate purplish red flower.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying illustrations show characteristics of the new cultivar in photographs as true to color as is reasonably possible to make in illustrations of this nature. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new *Loropetalum*.

FIG. 1 illustrates the growth habit of a 'LRD-02-20' plant growing in a 2-gallon container.

FIG. 2 illustrates a close-up of the foliage of 'LRD-02-20'.

FIG. 3 illustrates a close-up of the flowers of 'LRD-02-20'. Plants are approximately 1.5 years old.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2015 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used. Plants used for the description were approximately 2 years old and were grown in a container under outdoor conditions in Watkinsville, Ga. Colors are described using the Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart (R.H.S.). Botanical classification: *Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum* 'LRD-02-20'.

PROPAGATION

Type of propagation typically used: Vegetative terminal cuttings.

Time to initiate roots: About 35 days at 32° C. in summer. Number of days to produce a rooted plant in summer: 110 days at 27° C.

Root description: Numerous, fine, fibrous and well-branched. Color: RHS Purple N77B.

PLANT

Type of plant: Flowering shrub.

Age of plant described: 2 years old.

Container size of the plant described: 22.73 liters.

Growth habit: Compact, mounded, spreading. Freely branching; pruning enhances lateral branch development. Height: 41 cm.

Plant spread: 72 cm.

First year stems:

Length.—20 to 25 cm.

Diameter.—About 1.5 mm.

Shape.—Round.

Color.—RHS Red-brown N177B.

Pubescence.—Heavily stellate.

Second year stems:

Length.—30 to 35 cm.

Diameter.—3 mm or more.

Shape.—Round.

Color.—RHS Brown N200A.

Pubescence.—None.

Trunk/main stem diameter: About 2.8 cm at the soil line.

Trunk/main stem color: RHS Brown N199B.

Strength: Flexible when young, more easily broken when mature.

Bark: Exfoliates in flakes beginning on second year stems. Internode length: About 1.5 cm.

Vegetative buds:

Arrangement.—Alternate, imbricate.

Length.—About 1 mm.

Width.—About 1 mm.

Color.—RHS Red 187A.

Pubescence.—Stellate.

FOLIAGE

Leaf:

Arrangement.—Alternate, simple.

Average length.—2.8 cm.

Average width.—1.5 cm.

Shape of blade.—Ovate, rounded.

Apex.—Pointed.

Base.—Oblique.

Margin.—Finely-toothed.

Texture of top surface.—Stellate or sandpaper-like pubescence.

Texture of bottom surface.—Stellate or sandpaper-like pubescence.

Color.—Young foliage upper side: RHS Purplish-Pink N186C. Young foliage under side: RHS Purple N77B. Mature foliage upper side: RHS Purplish-Pink N186B. Mature foliage under side: RHS Purplish-Pink N187B.

Venation.—Type: Pinnate. Color, young foliage, upper side: RHS Purplish-Pink N186C. Color, young foliage, under side: RHS Purple N77B. Color, mature foliage upper side: RHS Purplish-Pink N186A. Color, mature foliage under side: RHS Purple N77C.

Petiole.—Length: 3.5 mm. Diameter: 1 mm. Color: RHS Purplish-Pink N186C. Pubescence: Stellate.

FLOWER

Natural flowering season: Flowers are produced in April in Watkinsville, Ga., and sporadically until frost. An inflorescence is showy for about two weeks, and individual flowers last about 2 to 3 days.

Inflorescence and flower type and habit: Umbel produced terminally and from leaf axils.

Inflorescence shape: 4 to 5 strap-like petals forming a loose funnel.

Quantity of florets per inflorescence: 4 to 8.

Persistence: Self-Cleaning.

Fragrance: None.

Flower buds:

Arrangement.—4 to 8 flowers from globose heads on branchlet terminals.

Shape.—Orbicular.

Length.—4 mm.

Diameter.—2 mm.

Color.—RHS Red 185B.

Petals:

Quantity per flower.—4.

Shape.—Strap-shaped.

Margin.—Entire.

Texture.—Smooth.

Length.—1.2 cm.

Width.—1.5 mm.

Apex.—Acuminate.

Base.—Obtuse.

Color.—Upper surface: RHS Purple-Red 60D. Lower surface: RHS Purple-Red 60D.

Sepals:

Quantity per flower.—4.

Texture.—Pubescent.

Arrangement.—Opposite.

Shape.—Ovate.

Length.—0.32 cm.

Width.—0.2 cm.

Apex.—Acute to obtuse turning outward.

Base.—Fused onto calyx cup.

Margin.—Entire.

Color.—Upper side: RHS Purple-Red 64A. Under side: RHS Purple-Red 59A.

Peduncle:

Length.—About 8 mm.

Diameter.—About 1 mm.

Texture.—Stellate.

Color.—RHS Purplish-Pink N186C.

Calyx:

Length.—About 3.5 mm.

Diameter.—About 2 mm.

Color.—RHS Purplish-Pink 185B, both surfaces.

Pubescence.—Stellate.

REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

Stamens:

Number.—4 or 5.

Length.—1.5 mm.

Width.—0.3 mm.

Color.—RHS Red-Purple N77A.

Pollen.—Amount: Scant. Color: RHS Pale Yellow 158A.

5 Pistil:

Number.—1 or 2 inferior pistils per flower.

Length.—Approximately 2 mm.

Color.—RHS Purplish-Red 71A.

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Style.—Length: 1 mm. Color: RHS Purplish-Red 71A.

Stigma.—Shape: Rounded. Color: RHS Purplish-Red 71A. Ovary: Length: 1 mm. Width: 1 mm. Color: RHS Purple 80A.

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OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Temperature tolerance: USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map (2012): Zone 7 to 9.

Fruits and seeds: Not observed to date.

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Disease/pest resistance: Plants of the claimed *Loropetalum* cultivar grown in the garden have not been noted to be susceptible or resistant to pathogens and pests common to *Loropetalum*.

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What is claimed is:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Loropetalum* plant named 'LRD-02-20' as herein illustrated and described.

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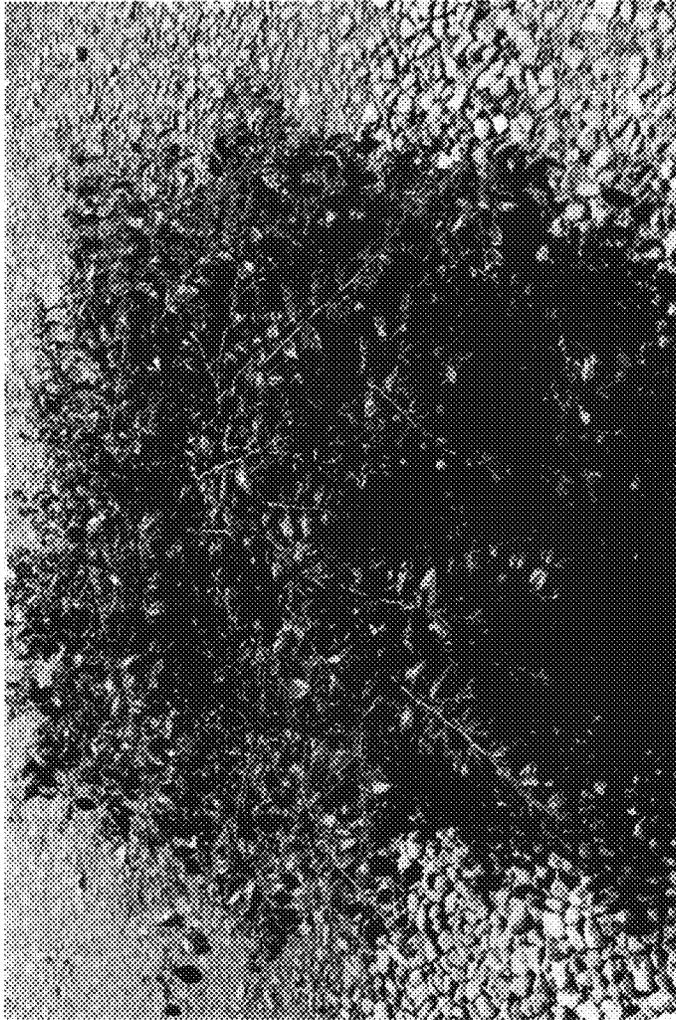


FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3