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Lee

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(54) **LAGERSTROEMIA PLANT NAMED ‘DELEE’**

(50) Latin Name: *Lagerstroemia indica*
Varietal Denomination: **DELEE**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **Plt./252**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct *Lagerstroemia* cultivar named ‘DELEE’ is disclosed, characterized by distinctive Greyed-Purple foliage and bright pink flowers. Plants maintain distinctive foliage color throughout growing season and show increased tolerance for Cercospora leaf spot (*C. lythracearum*). The new cultivar is a *Lagerstroemia*, suitable for ornamental garden purposes.

3 Drawing Sheets

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Latin name of the genus and species: *Lagerstroemia indica*.

Variety denomination: ‘DELEE’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The new cultivar is a product of a planned breeding program by the inventor, Robert Edward Lee. The inventor’s intention was to develop *Lagerstroemia* hybrid plants with dark foliage and resistance to Cercospora leaf spot (*C. lythracearum*). This new variety, hereinafter referred to as ‘DELEE’, was discovered as a seedling, resulting from an open pollination of several *Lagerstroemia indica* varieties. Seed was bulk collected from several seed parents, with the actual seed and pollen parents unidentified. The new variety was selected by the inventor during Summer of 2007 at a commercial nursery in Independence, La.

After identifying the new variety as a potentially interesting selection, the inventor first organized propagation of ‘DELEE’ by vegetative cuttings Fall of 2007 at the same commercial nursery in Independence, La. The inventor continued controlled testing and propagation, assessing stability of the unique characteristics of this variety. Multiple generations have been reproduced and have shown that the unique features of this cultivar are stable and reproduced true to type.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The cultivar ‘DELEE’ has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment such as temperature, day length, and light intensity, without, however, any variance in genotype. The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique charac-

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teristics of ‘DELEE’ These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘DELEE’ as a new and distinct *Lagerstroemia* cultivar:

1. Unique dark red-purple leaf color.
2. Dark foliage color maintained throughout growing season.
3. Bright pink flower color.
4. Increased tolerance for Cercospora leaf spot (*C. lythracearum*).

COMPARISON TO PARENT VARIETY

Parents cannot be identified.

COMMERCIAL COMPARISON

‘DELEE’ can be compared to the commercial variety *Lagerstroemia* hybrid ‘Chocolate Mocha’ U.S. Plant Pat. No. 21,540. Plants of the new cultivar ‘DELEE’ are similar to plants of ‘Chocolate Mocha’ in most horticultural characteristics, however, plants of the new cultivar ‘DELEE’ differ in the following:

1. ‘Delee’ produces dark pink blooms, this comparator produces light pink blooms.
2. Plants of ‘Delee’ produce longer inflorescence than this comparator.

‘DELEE’ can be compared to the commercial variety *Lagerstroemia* hybrid ‘WhitIV’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 11,342. Plants of the new cultivar ‘DELEE’ are similar to plants of ‘WhitIV’ in most horticultural characteristics, however, plants of the new cultivar ‘DELEE’ differ in the following:

1. ‘Delee’ has dark pink flowers, ‘WhitIV’ produces red flowers.
2. Foliage of ‘Delee’ is darker than foliage of ‘WhitIV’.
3. Dark foliage color of ‘Delee’ is maintained throughout the growing season, whereas foliage of ‘WhitIV’ is dark green, changing to bronze in the Fall.

'DELEE' can be compared to the variety *Lagerstroemia* hybrid 'DELEF', filed concurrently. Plants of the new cultivar 'DELEE' are similar to plants of 'DELEF' in most horticultural characteristics, however, plants of the new cultivar 'DELEE' differ in the following:

1. 'DELEE' has bright medium pink flowers, 'DELEE' produces dark pink flowers.
2. Foliage of 'DELEE' is slightly lighter Greyed-Purple than foliage of 'DELEF'.
3. Plants of 'DELEE' are denser, producing more lateral branches than plants of 'DELEF'.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying photograph in FIG. 1 illustrates in full color plant of the new variety, without flowers.

FIG. 2 illustrates typical foliage of the new variety.

FIG. 3 illustrates the inflorescence.

The photographs were taken using conventional techniques and although colors may appear different from actual colors due to light reflectance it is as accurate as possible by conventional photographic techniques.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart 2007 except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used. The following observations and measurements describe 'DELEE' plants grown outdoors in Loxley, Ala. Plants are approximately 2 years old, in a 3 gallon nursery container. Measurements and numerical values represent averages of typical plant types.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

Propagation

Typical propagation: Terminal cuttings.
Time to initiate roots: About 21 days at approximately 30° C.
Time to produce a rooted cutting/liner: About 25 to 35 days at approximately 30° C.
Root description: Fine, woody, dense. Colored near Grey-Brown 199A.

Plant

Growth habit: Upright, multi-stemmed small tree or shrub.
Age of plant described: Approximately 2 years.
Height: Approximately 90 cm.
Plant spread: Approximately 55 cm.
Trunk: Average 5 main stems, which develop into multi-trunked tree or shrub.
Diameter.—Approximately 3.5 cm, after 2 to 3 years.
Color.—Near RHS Brown N200B.
Texture.—Slightly scaly.
Pubescence.—None.
Lenticels.—Not Present.

Branching characteristics: Branches occurring at angles approximately 25° to 45° from trunk.
Length of primary lateral branches: Approximately 75 cm.
Diameter of lateral branches: Approximately 2.0 cm.
Approximate quantity of lateral branches: 5 lateral branches per main stem.

Young shoots:

Coloration.—Near RHS Greyed-Purple 187C. Nodes near Orange-White 159A.

Texture.—Ridged, slight, fine pubescence.

Lenticels.—Not Present.

Foliage

Leaf:

Arrangement.—Alternate. Foliage occurring in close alternate pairs (nearly sub-opposite). Pairs more widely spaced apart. Internode space between pairs average range 1.5 to 2.5 cm, internode space between paired leaves approximately 0.5 cm.

Quantity.—Approximately 40 per main branch.

Average length.—Approximately 3.5 cm.

Average width.—Approximately 2.4 cm.

Shape of blade.—Elliptic.

Apex.—Acute.

Base.—Cuneate.

Margin.—Entire, even/smooth throughout.

Texture of top surface.—Glabrous.

Texture of bottom surface.—Glabrous.

Color.—Young foliage upper side: Near RHS Greyed-Purple N187A. Young foliage under side: Near RHS Grey-Brown N199B, flushed N187A. Mature foliage upper side: Near RHS Greyed-Green N189A, flushed Greyed-Purple 183A, and 187B. Mature foliage under side: Near RHS Yellow-Green 147A, flushed Greyed-Purple 187B.

Venation.—Type: Pinnate. Venation color upper side: Near RHS Greyed-Purple 183A. Venation color under side: Near RHS Greyed-Purple 187B.

Petiole.—Length: Approximately 0.2 cm. Width: Approximately 0.1 cm. Color: Near RHS Greyed-Purple 187A. Texture: Glabrous.

Flower

Natural flowering season: Summer through Fall.
Inflorescence type and habit: Panicle.
Quantity of flowers per inflorescence: Approximately 150 to 250 flowers.

Inflorescence size:

Diameter.—Approximately 9.0 cm.

Height.—Approximately 17.0 cm.

Individual flowers:

Size:

Diameter.—Approximately 2.9 cm.

Length.—Approximately 1.6 cm.

Petals:

Petal quantity.—6 to 12.

Size.—Length: 1.2 cm. Width: 1.6 cm.

Margin.—Highly lobate, highly undulate.

Apex.—Obtuse.

Base.—Cordate.

Texture.—Glabrous.

Color:

Petals.—When opening: Inner surface: Near RHS Red-Purple 61B. Outer surface: Near RHS Red-Purple 63B. Fully opened: Inner surface: Between RHS Red-Purple 63B. Outer surface: Near RHS Red-Purple 61C. Color Changes when aging: Inner surface: Near RHS Red-Purple 63C and 62C. Outer surface: Near RHS Red-Purple 62D.

Bud:

Shape.—Spherical.
Length.—Approximately 0.8 cm.
Diameter.—Approximately 0.8 cm.
Color.—Near RHS Red-Purple 61A.

Peduncle:

Length.—Average range 5.0 to 9.0 cm.
Diameter.—0.3 cm.
Color.—Near RHS Greyed-Purple 187B.
Texture.—Glabrous.
Aspect.—Straight. Angle of attachment, approximately 25° angle from stem.

Pedicle:

Length.—Average 0.5 cm.
Diameter.—0.1 cm.
Color.—Near RHS Greyed-Purple 187A, lightly streaked N187C.
Texture.—Glabrous.

Fragrance: Very faint fragrance.

Reproductive Organs

Stamens:

Number.—Approximately 25.
Filament length.—Approximately 0.9 cm.
Filament color.—Near RHS Red-Purple 63C. 25

Anthers:

Length.—Less than 0.1 cm, close to 0.5 mm.
Shape.—Rounded.
Color.—Near RHS Yellow 7C.

5 *Pollen.*—Quantity: Abundant. Color: Near RHS Yellow 8C.

Pistil:

Number.—5.
Length.—Approximately 1.4 cm.
Style.—Length: Approximately 1.2 cm. Color: Near RHS Greyed-Purple 186B.
Stigma.—Shape: Rounded. Color: Near RHS Green 137C. Ovary: Color: Near RHS Yellow 8B. Size: Approximately 0.2 cm. Shape: Spherical.

Other Characteristics

Disease/pest resistance: Increased tolerance for *Cercospora* leaf spot (*C. lythracearum*).

20 Temperature tolerance: USDA Zones 7, 8, 9.

What is claimed is:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Lagerstroemia* plant named 'DELEE' as herein illustrated and described.

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2



FIG. 3