

The importance of USA National Arboretum crapemyrtles in the USA nursery industry[©]

D. Kidwell-Slak^a and M. Pooler

USDA/ARS/U.S. National Arboretum, Floral & Nursery Plants Research Unit, 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002, USA.

Abstract

The U.S. National Arboretum has bred and released crapemyrtles for over thirty years. In that time, Arboretum scientists have introduced genetics which have revolutionized crapemyrtle production in the United States. The greatest contribution to crapemyrtles was probably the introgression of powdery mildew (*Erysiphe lagerstromiae*) resistance via breeding with *Lagerstroemia fauriei*, which was brought to the USA from Japan by Arboretum staff. Almost all powdery mildew resistance in modern crapemyrtles has derived from that plant introduction. Additionally, the Arboretum was the first to develop and release dwarf crapemyrtles in the USA and almost all modern dwarves are derived in some way from Arboretum plants. A recent market review indicates that 30% of all available (from at least one nursery) cultivars of crapemyrtle are either USNA introductions or directly derived from USNA plant material. There are approximately 61 crapemyrtle cultivars that are more popular and more available (more than one nursery lists inventory). USNA introductions and plants directly derived from USNA plant material make up more than 50% (31 plants) of the most popular and available crapemyrtles in the USA nursery industry.

^aE-mail: David.Kidwell-Slak@ars.usda.gov

