**Prunus cerasifera ‘Newportii’**

Newport Cherry Plum

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

Growing 15 feet high and wide, Newport Cherry Plum forms a rounded silhouette of dark purple foliage (Fig. 1). The new leaves unfold as light bronze-purple but quickly change to red or red-purple. ‘Newport’ Cherry Plum has pale bluish-pink springtime flowers which are followed by one-inch-diameter, dull purple fruits. It is said to be one of the hardiest purple-leaved plums but is also quite common throughout the South.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** *Prunus cerasifera* ‘Newportii’

**Pronunciation:** PROO-nus sair-uh-SIFF-er-uh

**Common name(s):** Newport Cherry Plum, Newport Purple-Leaf Plum

**Family:** Rosaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 4B through 7 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 15 to 18 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** round; vase shape

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval); obovate; ovate

**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** purple or red

**Fall color:** purple

**Fall characteristic:** showy

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Prunus cerasifera ‘Newportii’ -- Newport Cherry Plum

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Flower

**Flower color:** pink; white
**Flower characteristics:** showy; spring flowering

Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches
**Fruit covering:** fleshy
**Fruit color:** purple
**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
**Breakage:** resistant
**Current year twig color:** brown; reddish

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
**Drought tolerance:** moderate
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible
**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Very popular due to the unusual leaf color, many gardeners want one of these things in their yard. But one plant really attracts attention to an area, and it can be overpowering in a small landscape creating a
cramped feeling. Due to the strong effect, best used in a large-scale landscape as a single specimen, not in a row or mass planting. It makes a nice, small ornamental near the deck or patio but locate it far enough away so dropping fruit will fall on the lawn or in a groundcover bed. It is often short-lived.

‘Newport’ Cherry Plum should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid soil to bring out the richest leaf color. It tolerates slightly alkaline soil. Tolerant of moderate heat and drought, it often succumbs to borers on poor, compacted soil.

Propagation is by cuttings.

**Pests**

This Cherry Plum is susceptible to aphids, borers, scales, mealy bugs, and tent caterpillars.

**Diseases**

Canker and leaf spots may infect this tree.