

Loropetalum chinense var. *rubrum* – Fringe Flower

Common Name(s): Fringe flower, Redleaf loropetalum

Cultivar(s): Blush, Burgundy, Razzleberri

Categories: Shrub

Habit: Evergreen

Height/Width: 6-10 feet tall and 6-10 feet wide; some dwarf varieties available

Hardiness: Zones 7 to 9

Foliage: Alternate, simple ovate-rounded green to maroon leaves; 1-2.5 in. long; new growth is reddish; best color with high fertility and moisture; some cultivars maintain reddish color in summer

Flower: Half inch long fragrant, straw-shaped flowers in spring; 3 to 6 flowers crowded together in leaf axis

Flower Color: pink to almost red flowers

Site/Sun: Sun to partial shade; tolerates range of soil types but prefers acidic, moist, well-drained soil high in organic matter; drought and heat tolerant

Form: Irregular to rounded shrub with whip-like shoots

Regions: Native to China, Japan and parts of Southeast Asia.

Comments: Very heat and drought tolerant, deer resistant, have few pests, grow quickly and need little pruning. However, they can be severely pruned after flowering.



Currituck MG Plant of the Month – January/February 2018

When, Where, and How to Plant

L. chinense var. *rubrum* does best planted in an area with partial shade for a portion of each day. The ideal spot is one that gets some morning sun, with light, filtered shade that shifts position during the afternoon. It also prefers rich, fertile, well-drained soil as they are one of those plants that do not like 'wet feet'. Adding compost to your soil at planting can help boost its organic content and support the plant's growth.

Care and Things to Watch

Fertilize your shrub two or three times each year with a slow-release, balanced 10-10-10 granular fertilizer to help keep the shrub growing and flowering well. Mix about 1/4 cup of fertilizer into the soil at the plant's root zone, taking care not to disturb the plant's roots. The fringe flower shrub is quite drought-tolerant once established and not susceptible to any serious plant diseases or insect pests.

L. chinense var. *rubrum* also responds well to pruning if done after the spring flush of flowers is finished. This will prevent interference with next season's bloom as the plant sets buds on new wood. Removing the tallest branches at an outward-facing bud can help train the plant into a more horizontal, shorter form, with new growth arching gracefully toward the ground.

Companion Planting and Design

An attractive shrub that is available in large, medium, and dwarf cultivars, makes it a versatile plant whose size usually stays within bounds. Depending on the variety, it can be use in containers, foundation plantings, specimen accents, or in masses. It can also be grown in an area where a cascade of foliage is desired. Its low and spreading growth habit makes it a good selection for a groundcover on slopes or embankments, or as a border around the perimeter of beds or along paths and walks.

Bloom Period and Season Color

L. chinense var. *rubrum* blooms from late winter through spring with sporadic re-bloom thru summer. It is most known for its striking fuchsia flowers, purple-black leaves, and weeping branch formation. If pink is not the color you desire, there are also some *L. chinense* varieties with white flowers that bloom during the same time period.

Sources: plants.ces.ncsu.edu; homeguides.sfgate.com; pender.ces.ncsu.edu; nc4h.ces.ncsu.edu; extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu