



Leycesteria formosa 'Purple Rain'



Height	2 m
Width	1-2m
Crown	round
Bark and branches	twigs blue-green, bark grey, slightly flaking
Leaf	ovoid, tip tapering, 5-15 cm, mid-green
Flowers	creamy white to pinkish white, in pendent racemes with purplish-red bracts, August-September
Fruits	berry-shaped, shiny black purple
Spines/thorns	None
Toxicity	usually not toxic to people, (large) pets and livestock
Soil type	few soil requirements
Paving	tolerates no paving
Winter hardiness zone	7a (-17,7 to -15,0 °C)
Wind resistance	moderate, no cold or drying wind
Fauna tree	provides food for birds
Application	roof gardens, coastal areas, small gardens, patio gardens
Origin	U.S. National Arboretum, Washington D.C., USA, 1995

'Purple Rain' forms a bushy, bulbous shrub to about 2 m in height, growing with many branches from the base. The annual twigs are beautifully frosted blue-green. The older bark is grey and flakes slightly when older. The young twigs are hollow and therefore not very strong. Annual twigs in particular can freeze considerably if frost sets in early in the winter. As the plant will then start growing again from the base, a slightly tousled, bushy shrub is created. So plant 'Purple Rain' preferably in a sheltered place. The plant tolerates heat well, but not drought.

The opposite leaves have a graceful, long, pointed tip. The axillary pendulous flower clusters appear in the second half of summer. These are distinguished by purple-red bracts, between which cream to pinkish-white bell-shaped flowers appear. When the flowers have finished flowering, they are followed by green berries, which turn blackish purple via brown. The purplish-red bracts remain all the time, forming a beautiful whole.

With the species name *formosa*, one might think of Taiwan (formerly Formosa). However, this is not the case. *Formosa* means "beautiful". If the plant were named after Taiwan, it would have been called "*formosana*".