

# Plantline

January 2015

A Newsletter from Carlton Plants LLC

## AN APPRECIATION OF PARROTIA PERSICA

By Joe Dixon

There are not very many trees found in our nursery industries that are held in as high esteem as is *Parrotia persica*. This tree is also known as Persian Parrotia or Persian Ironwood. It is native to the Alborz mountainous region of Iran. It was first collected and described around 1830 and was named after the German born naturalist FW Parrot.

It remains one of the least known and appreciated shade trees being grown and offered by nurseries today but is quickly gaining popularity as city foresters and landscape designers become increasingly familiar with its many wonderful attributes. In doing research for this article the



one thing that stood out was the high regard that horticultural writers have for this tree. Having a specimen in my own yard, to appreciate through the seasons, puts me in total agreement with all of the superlatives that are written about *Parrotia persica*. It was honored in 2007 by the International Dendrology Society as tree of the year.

*Parrotia persica* grown from a seedling can vary widely regarding its mature form and ultimate size. Typical specimens will reach anywhere from 20 to 40 foot tall by 15 to 30 foot wide. There is a



magnificent mature specimen at the Elk Rock Gardens of Bishop's Close near Portland, Oregon that is much wider than it is tall. If a designer for a project is looking to plant a grouping or boulevard with *Parrotia* of consistent size and form there are clonal selections available to choose from.



"Thought is the blossom, language the bud, and action the fruit behind it."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

### IN THIS ISSUE

2

*Parrotia persica*

3

*I Can See Clearly Now Reflective Markers*

4

*Little Twist Shrub Form*

5

*Parrotia continued*

6

*Carlton Field Reps Tradeshow Schedule*

# Customer Corner

## NEW BUILDING- NEW OPPORTUNITY

WILL STELLER

Maple Lane Nursery in Valatie, New York recently built a new steel potting building. When working on the designs with the builders, our customer David Martino identified that one of the problems he had with his old building was the lack of bareroot storage. When material was received it was neatly stacked and covered in a non-heated enclosed steel building, which also held the potting machine, limiting space when potting occurred. Doors had to be opened and closed to get soil in, potted plants out and empty trailers in. With all the activity moisture levels became inconsistent, a big problem for bareroot plants.



David Martino

The new building design gave the crew plenty of space to pot and leave additional space for adding a bareroot storage room. The dimensions of the storage room are 50' long by 12' wide and 10' tall, just a bit smaller than a refrigerated semi-trailer. The room usually gets filled and emptied 2-3 times each potting season. It is equipped with a humidity controlled misting system and also has access to hose water in multiple locations in order to perform spot watering when necessary. The floor is designed to taper toward two drains in the floor allowing crews to wash down after each rotation. All walls in the room are insulated and covered with metal sheeting. The average temperature when empty is around 35-37 degrees; filled with plants it can maintain a 45 degree temperature.



Ready to fill

The respiration of the plants increases the temperature so a natural "sweating process" occurs as the material is being potted up. The result is excellent bud break out of dormancy. A cooler average temperature would hold dormancy longer so a future plan to add a cooling system to this room will ensure the crew at Maple Lane the ability to carry a longer potting season if needed.



Mist System

Ideally all growers would love to have cold storage with control of moisture and temperature but we do the best with what we have. It is important to remember to monitor moisture and temperature when storing your bareroot material for any period of time.

Bareroot goods should be stored in a cool, dark, well-drained location that allows you the ability to water the roots when needed. Adding secondary material on the roots like hay, straw or cedar toe also increases successful plantings. 



Stacked trees

# I Can See Clearly Now

By Allan Elliott

**T**oo many times we've heard "I didn't see it" when people reported damage to vehicles, irrigation risers and manifolds, as well as drainage structures. It had happened to all of us resulting in embarrassment and expensive, time consuming repairs.



*A previous marker*

The short T-posts and other miscellaneous markers in use just didn't work, it was time for improvement.

A small "Focus Group" was formed to evaluate the situation and identify the problem areas. The goal was to develop a standardized approach to marking and guarding obstacles in our fields. The solution had to be cost effective, long lasting and durable and have a universal application throughout the fields. We established that visibility was critical and that height, width, color and reflective capability were to be addressed.



*Irrigation risers and a catch basin with new markers*

An inventory of field structures indicated there were hundreds of items to be marked. After much research we settled on a flexible, bright yellow marker, 4" wide, 1/2" thick and 72" long. To this we added a piece of 3" wide by 9" long red and white reflective tape to the top of the marker on each side and angled the bottom to a point allowing us to push it into the ground. The group went on to establish protocol for placement and installation, a budget and timeline for moving forward and a list of tools, supplies and people to complete the work.



*Irrigation riser*

In 2014 progress was made as reflective markers showed up on many farms clearly indicating irrigation equipment, culverts and catch basins. Although it hasn't eliminated all accidents, it certainly has slowed them down. 

# drivin' around

by Jason Bizon

**R**eds, purples and yellows are hard to miss in the landscape in the month of October and that's especially true to those of us who grow shade trees and shrubs. One of the great things about this time of year is driving the once dusty summer roads, now heavily covered in mud by the myriad of fall downpours mixed with machinery, and catching a plant with unbeknownst colors. That very thing happened to



*Twisty branches, pink blooms*

me the other day as I drove past the shrub digging crews busily shaking the soft sandy dirt off of freshly removed roots. Even though I have a *Prunus incisa* 'Little Twist' standard planted in my own home landscape, it was something about this day, maybe the sun was breaking through just



*Red fall color*

right, or maybe mine at home is in too much shade. 'Little Twist' is known as a spectacular early spring blooming cherry typically grafted to various heights of 24" up to 4'. I have seen them strategically placed in beautiful terracotta pots around various garden centers and water gardens for early spring appeal.



*Beginning to bloom*

Almost all customers have to stop and ask what it is and often take one home. But today it was the brilliant fall colors that caught my eye. The top of the leaves were mostly brilliant red and yellow fighting the last remaining green colors off their now claimed leathery turf. The underside flickered in the afternoon wind revealing the underside rust colored portion of the leaf. All the leaves were clean having endured the scorching suns of Oregon's August and September. The tiny sharp serrations of the leaves edges were still intact in typical "cherry like" fashion.

**G**rown as a shrub form their flowers arrive in early spring after the Forsythias but before the flowering currants. The tiny pink bell shaped blooms ravage the zig zag branches of winter and although those crazy branches have given the plant some character through the long winter, seeing the blooms lets you know that spring has sprung. Growing *Prunus* 'Little Twist' in shrub form allows for color accents in the landscape in both spring and fall. Walking back to the truck I thought how nice this shrub would be in contrast with the blues of a spruce or cedar. It does need some room since it's an own root shrub.

I would plant them in multiples of three on 5-6' centers knowing that after each years' blooms they would meet the shears. Another advantage of the own root shrub is the price. Grafted selections of any plant have an added cost to the end user. The shrub form offers all the wonderful attributes of 'Little Twist' to even the most price conscience customers.



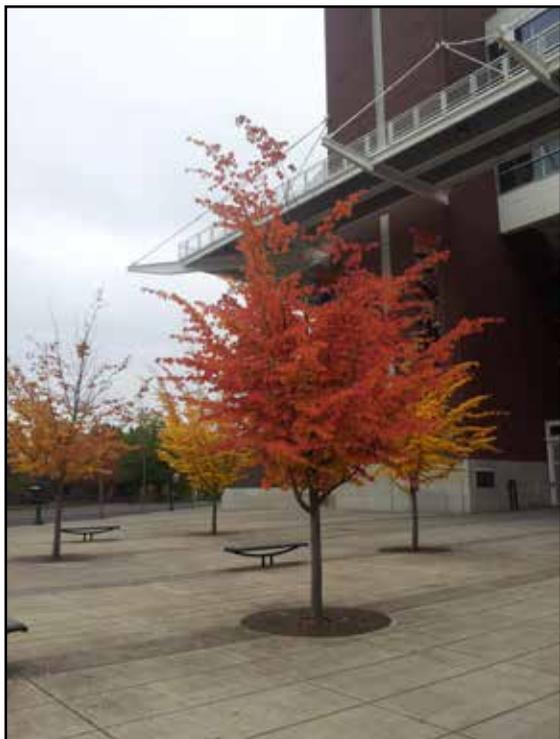
*Multicolors in fall*

'Little Twist' is hardy to zone 5 and is also fortunate enough to be part of our Virus Certified selections rendering it free of any viruses. 'Little Twist' is easy to grow requiring little water or fertilizer, in fact overwatering is the number one cause of death for 'Little Twist'. Being a cherry it likes to bask in



*Pink Blooms*

the full sun of summer or winter. If you're looking for an early spring attraction to spruce up the front of your garden center, water feature or your home landscape consider *Prunus* 'Little Twist' in the shrub form. And don't be surprised if your eye gets caught wandering into its wonderful fall colors of October!



But first I should highlight the attributes that make this tree such a desirable one to use in our modern landscapes.

- It is very disease and insect free in most areas.
- It produces an extraordinary rainbow display of fall colors that include yellows, oranges, reds, purples and mixed variations of all. From year to year the fall color display can vary so we look forward to being surprised with striking variations every autumn.
- The fall color display is long slow and gradual and can last for weeks prior to final leaf drop.
- The branching structure tends to be layered and very elegant with very glossy rich green foliage in the summer.
- With age the bark begins to exfoliate similar to a sycamore except it reveals various shaped silvery blotches of tans, browns and grays for a striking multi-colored effect.



This now brings us to a clonal selection that can be planted for its consistent upright growth: **Parrotia persica 'Ruby Vase' (cultivar 'Inge')**

'Ruby Vase' is a variety selected and registered with COPF in 2001 by Sandy Howkins at Specimen Trees in Pitt Meadows, BC Canada. It has an upright vase shaped habit that is symmetrical and well balanced.

The average mature height is 30 feet with a spread of 12 feet.

The new growth emerges with a lovely rich burgundy color and holds tints of red in the foliage throughout the summer. Fall color varies like the species.

It has a Zone 4 hardiness rating

Overall 'Ruby Vase' exceeds or is on a par with the best fall coloring, pest free, upright growing tree varieties currently available in our industry. There are not too many varieties that do fit this ideal combination of attributes so 'Ruby Vase' is a very welcome addition to that very select list for planting as a beautiful, colorful, low maintenance tree in our urban landscapes.

Carlton offers both Parrotia persica and Parrotia persica 'Ruby Vase' in both tree and multi-stem forms.



# Carlton Plants LLC Field Reps



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## VISIT US AT THE WINTER TRADESHOWS

**The Western**  
Overland Park, KS  
January 4-5  
Booth 316

**Green & Growin**  
Greensboro, NC  
January 8-9  
Booth 723

**Montana Green**  
Billings, MT  
January 7-8  
Booth 3C

**CENTS**  
Columbus, OH  
January 7-9  
Booth 1913

**Pro-Green Expo**  
Denver, CO  
January 14-16  
Booth 743

**Northern Green**  
Minneapolis, MN  
January 14-16  
Booth 1130

**MANTS**  
Baltimore, MD  
January 14-16  
Booth 809

**Idaho Hort**  
Boise, ID  
Jan 21-23  
Booth 302

**Utah Green Industry**  
Sandy, UT  
January 26-28  
Booth 602

**Great Lakes Expo**  
Grand Rapids, MI  
January 26-28  
Booth 714

**Great Plains Expo**  
Sioux Falls, SD  
February 1-3  
Booth 13

**New England Grows**  
Boston, MA  
February 4-6  
Booth 1621

**Norcal**  
San Mateo, Ca  
February 12  
Booth 843

**Illinois Landscape Show**  
Chicago, IL  
February 25-27  
Booth 1035



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