Puriri

Vitex lucens

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: New Zealand Chaste Tree

Description:

A broadleaf, evergreen tree with a well branched, spreading, rounded crown; attractive oval foliage with pointed tips is shiny dark green in color with wavy margins; pink-red flowers in late fall to spring, followed by red berries; highly ornamental

Ornamental Features

Puriri features showy panicles of lightly-scented pink tubular flowers with red overtones at the ends of the branches from late fall to mid spring. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The large glossy oval palmate leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries from mid summer to mid spring. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The furrowed gray bark and tan branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Puriri is a dense evergreen tree with a more or less rounded form. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.



Puriri foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Puriri flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Puriri is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

Puriri will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 60 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America.



Puriri fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder