

Preliminary Information on the Cold Hardiness of *Loropetalum*

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Five taxa of *Loropetalum chinense*, including the species, 'Sizzling Pink', 'Ruby' and 'Zhuzhou', were evaluated for cold hardiness monthly from December 1998 through April 1999. Cold hardiness was determined by using laboratory procedures established in our laboratory.

The species gained hardiness earlier than the other cultivars. In December stem cold hardiness of the species was estimated at -18 C, while the hardiness of the cultivars ranged from -12 C to -15 C.

In January the species maintained the same level of hardiness as in December while, 'Sizzling Pink', 'Ruby', and 'Zhuzhou' reached cold hardiness levels of (-21 C), (-18 C), and (-18 C), respectively.

In February the species and 'Sizzling Pink' lost 3 C and 6C of cold hardiness, respectively. This may be attributed to a spell of warm weather prior to this sampling date. At this same date, 'Ruby' and 'Zhuzhou' actually gained cold hardiness (-19 C and -22 C, respectively).

In March the species and 'Sizzling Pink' maintained their cold hardiness while 'Ruby' and 'Zhuzhou' lost 4 C and 7 C of cold hardiness, respectively.

In general the species hardened earlier than the other cultivars. 'Zhuzhou' was the slowest to reach its maximum cold hardiness level (February) and along with 'Ruby' lost the most cold hardiness between February and March. Plants that gain cold hardiness early in the winter may avoid damage to early frosts and conversely those that lose cold hardiness early in the spring may be susceptible to late spring frost damage. Please note this information is preliminary and that differences may occur in hardiness levels of plants depending on the year, location, or cultural practices used for production.