

Prunus 'First Lady'

The U.S. National Arboretum presents '**First Lady**', a new, classically elegant, hybrid flowering cherry. This charming, upright tree warms the days of early spring with a multitude of nodding, dark rose-pink flowers, a vibrant counterpoint to the soft colors of other flowering cherries.





'First Lady' Flowering Cherry

Botanical Name:	<i>Prunus 'First Lady'</i> (NA 61052; PI 584481)
Family	Rosaceae
Hardiness:	U.S.D.A. Zones 6 - 8, possibly into zone 9
Development:	In 1982 Dr. Donald Egolf hybridized <i>Prunus x incam 'Okame'</i> with <i>P. campanulata</i> , a species not hardy in U.S.D.A. zone 7. Progeny were evaluated for both flower color and hardiness. One seedling in particular proved outstanding with deep rose-pink flower color, upright form, and good cold-hardiness. Selected for further evaluation in 1988, this hybrid was named 'First Lady' and officially released August 7, 2003. The cultivar name 'First Lady' was registered with the International Registration Authority for Unassigned Woody Genera in February, 2004.
Significance:	'First Lady' represents the combination of many desirable elements of both parents in a unique form. The abundant flowers and hardiness of the female parent, 'Okame', combine with the excellent dark green foliage and deep pink to near red flower color of the pollen parent, <i>P. campanulata</i> , to produce a fast-growing, upright tree that retains its columnar habit with age.
Description:	Height and Width: 27 feet tall with a crown spread of 14 feet wide at 20 years. Habit: Strongly upright, almost columnar. Foliage: Glossy, heavy-textured, large dark green leaves. Flowers: Abundant, dark rose-pink, single, campanulate, semi-pendulous flowers open in late March in the Washington, DC area, approximately the same time as the female parent <i>Prunus x incam 'Okame'</i> . Dark red calyces remain ornamental for several weeks after flower petals have fallen, giving the illusion of bloom. Fruit: A drupe. Ovoid, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, dark red at maturity. Readily eaten by birds.
Culture:	'First Lady' grows and flowers well in full sun in well-drained soils of various types. Requires no pruning to maintain its upright shape.
Propagation:	Most commercial propagation is by budding or grafting onto compatible rootstocks (<i>P. incisa</i> ; <i>P. 'Okame'</i>). Softwood cuttings can be taken from juvenile plants; cutting propagation from mature plants is challenging.
Landscape Use:	Specimen plant, grouped plantings in residential, park, or public areas, highway beautification projects, street plantings, or in areas where a narrow-crowned tree is desirable.
Availability:	Limited wholesale availability in 2004. For source list of cooperating wholesale nurseries, contact Dr. Margaret Pooler, U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

**U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction
Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit**

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