

The New and Improved **CHASTE TREE**

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Chaste tree (genus *Vitex*) is an ornamental with many desirable qualities for the urban landscape. It is a deciduous plant ranging in size from a shrub to small tree. It provides violet flowers — which are a magnet for pollinators — fragrant foliage, and excellent drought and deer tolerance. It's not surprising that it has been touted as one of the best plants for Georgia gardens. It is cold hardy throughout Georgia; however, in the north Georgia mountains, it may suffer minor to moderate damage during particularly cold winters.

There is always room for improvement on what nature provides, so the breeding team at the University of Georgia Department of Horticulture has spent years working to improve this valuable ornamental. They are ready to offer several great, new plants to the landscape industry and the public. For fans of the racing world, and in tribute of the plants' heat and drought tolerance, come the Daytona Heat™ series of *Vitex* cultivars: Daytona Heat™ Danica Pink, Daytona Heat™ Dale White, and Daytona Heat™ Petty Blue. Other new cultivars are Pink Pinnacle™ and 'Little Madame.' All of these plants are in the process of being patented. Here are the highlights on the newest chaste trees.



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Daytona Heat™ Danica Pink grows to 9 feet tall and sports stunning, compact, dense, dark pink flowers. Green leaves appear in the spring, turning deeper green in the summer and becoming a delicate yellow-green in the fall. The underside of the leaves remains grey-green throughout the season. Its form is more compact than other *Vitex* on the market, making it appear fuller and denser. Blooms appear consistently from summer through fall.



Daytona Heat™ Danica Pink shows off exquisite, dense pink flowers and green foliage.

Daytona Heat™ Dale White attracts attention with its abundance of upright, gorgeous, white flower clusters from spring to fall. From emergence to full bloom to fading, the flower petals remain white. Leaves emerge yellow-green, become a deep green in the summer, and finally turn a yellow-green in the fall. The leaves' underside remains grey-green throughout the season. It grows to an impressive height of 12 feet. Compared to the other *Vitex* available, this cultivar is a larger plant with fuller flower spikes.



Daytona Heat™ Dale White impressive flower spikes display.

Daytona Heat™ Petty Blue catches the eye with its picturesque violet-blue flower clusters, which are fuller and more branched than the rest of the series. The tallest of the bunch, Petty Blue can reach a striking height of 13 feet. At full bloom, the flower petals show a range of violet color, from pale to dark lavender. As with many of the other cultivars, the leaves start off yellow-green in the spring, turn darker in the summer, and become yellow-green again in the fall. Petty Blue ‘zooms’ consistently from June through October.



Daytona Heat™ Petty Blue violet-blue flower clusters are sure to impress — even if you’re driving by at 50 miles per hour!

The lovely Pink Pinnacle™ cultivar of *Vitex* stands out at a height of 11 feet, showcasing its beautiful dark pink and full-flower clusters. In the spring, yellow-green leaves unfurl, becoming deeper green in the summer, and turning yellow-green again in the fall. Pink Pinnacle™ blooms from June through September and, when the mood strikes, even October.



Pink Pinnacle™ at peak bloom.

Vitex 'Little Madame' is not your usual chaste tree; it has a smaller, denser form, and the foliage gives it an overall appearance that is finer in texture. It grows to a height of 7 feet, with yellow-green leaves emerging in the spring, changing to a deeper yellow-green during the summer, and finally turning to a lighter yellow-green with lovely streaks of grey-orange in the fall. The blooms contribute to the fine texture and are a darker purple, reminiscent of the lavender plant. 'Little Madame' is a dependable bloomer from June through August, with flowers in September most years as well.



'Little Madame' shows off dainty yellow-green foliage to match its delicate violet-blue flowers.

For dependable performance in the sizzling Georgia summers, be sure to keep your garden cool, beautiful, and sustainable — plant one or all of these spectacular new cultivars today! Plants can be purchased at mass market stores and local independent garden centers.

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