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[54] *NERIUM OLEANDER* PLANT 'TURNER'S 5-387'

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[57] ABSTRACT

A *Nerbiium oleander* plant which has a intermediate and upright habit of fairly rapid growth, being particularly characterized by its ever blooming character and the unique color of its inflorescence, the flowers being a medium pink color with areas of pink, and by flowers having a sweet fragrance.

1 Drawing Sheet

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DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety, of intermediate size, of *Nerium oleander* which was originated by me as a seedling by selection and crossing. I crossed a *Nerium oleander* "Algiers" with a *Nerium oleander* "Turner's Shari D". The "Algiers" is an intermediate size plant which produces a single flower of florescent red color. "Turner's Shari D" is the subject of U.S. Plant Pat. No. 5,378 issued Dec. 25, 1984 to Ted L. Turner, Sr., and this plant is a intermediate to full size plant with flowers which are soft buff yellow with tinges of pink. However in making my crosses, I observed that pollination could have been accomplished by bees from unknown plants. Thus unknown parentage could have been introduced by the bees even though I did not purposely introduce any parentage other than the "Shari D" and the "Algiers".

From the group of seedlings I observed a plant, being the plant claimed herein, having a new and distinct color of flowers, and from cuttings of such plant I was able to asexually reproduce plants having the same characteristics and flower color as the original seedling. All of the descendant plants showed the same characteristics as the original seedling, and as a result of extensive observations and tests which are not described in full herein for sake of brevity, it is my opinion and I am convinced that my new plant is a new variety of *Nerium oleander* which is distinguished from all other varieties of which I am aware as evidenced by the following unique combination of principal characteristics which are outstanding therein:

- (1) An upright habit of fairly rapid growth and of intermediate size making it especially suitable for hedges, or to add garden color;
- (2) An ability to be asexually reproduced;
- (3) An everblooming ability to flower substantially throughout the year with long continuous blooming periods;
- (4) The ability to bloom in partial shade, such as morning sun only;
- (5) The ability to be a good greenhouse bloomer;
- (6) The ability to initially grow and flower in relatively small pots as small as about ten to fifteen centimeters in diameter although, the plant should be placed in a larger pot of at least 36 centimeters to obtain larger growth; and
- (7) The ability to produce a flower having a medium pink color with areas of pink;
- (8) The ability to produce a flower with a sweet fragrance.

Asexual reproductions of my new variety as by cuttings shown that the foregoing characteristics and distinctions

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come true to form and are established and transmitted through succeeding propagations. The ongoing planned breeding program which resulted in the plant described herein and the initial asexual reproduction of this plant have taken place at a nursery in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Tex.

The accompanying FIGURE is a photograph of a typical flower on the plant of my new variety more clearly illustrating the colors present on each flower. The true color of the foliage and flowers is described in the following description and is depicted in the FIGURE which depicts the color as nearly as true as is reasonably possible in a color illustration of this type.

The following is a detailed description of my new variety of *Nerium oleander*, which color numbers in accordance with the Pantone Matching System of colors for printing inks, Pantone Color Formula Guide 747 XR, 1987–1988, published by Pantone, Inc. Terms used to describe colors are those of ordinary significance.

The Plant

Growth habit: Upright, intermediate size; the height of an unpruned mature plant will probably be from about 3 to 5 meters, but has not yet been determined; fast growing. The plant grows full from just about ground level upward, with the width of the plant about 65% to 90% of the height. The plant is slightly larger than "Algiers" referenced to above, and also slightly larger than the *Nerium oleander* "Shari D".

Hardiness: Adapted to seaside planting as it tolerates soil with relatively high salt content; tolerates droughts; will not withstand prolonged and severe freezing weather; most suitable for the Southern United States from California to Florida, in the areas known as Zones 9 and 10; withstands heat and light and grows either in full sun or in partial shade (up to 50% shade) such as morning sun only; can be started and will bloom in small pots as small as about 10 to 16 centimeters in diameter, although the plant should be transferred to a larger pot of 36 centimeters or larger to obtain a larger growth.

Branches: The plant is loosely branched from just above ground level with main branches and branchlets ascending. The plant does not develop a central leader or trunk. New growth of branches is a light to medium green, Color No. 583U, changing to light greenish brown, Color No. 4505U, in color as branches mature. The old or matured wood is a pale brownish gray, Color No. 2U.

Blooming period: In a mild winter, an outside plant will bloom off and on substantially the entire year. In a cold

winter, an outside plant will bloom off and on about 80% of the year. The plant will bloom substantially all the time in a greenhouse.

The Foliage

Type: Broadleaf evergreen; numerous; petioled; grow in a whorl with three leaves in each whorl.

Shape: Linear-lanceolate, with entire margins. Apex is more or less acuminate and slightly non-symmetrical, and base is acute.

Petioles: Length, from about 3 to 5 mm; color pale green.

Leaf size: Length of mature leaf from about 130 to 200 mm; width of mature leaf about 20 to 30 mm. Size of leaf varies according to sunshine conditions at the time the leaf is produced, with larger leaves being produced under cloudy conditions than under sunny conditions.

Venation: Midrib on under surface prominent and readily apparent and is pale green, Color No. 587U; on upper surface midrib is clearly visible and slightly recessed, and is pale green, Color No. 587U; lateral veins are not readily apparent on upper surface but under surface contains numerous, delicate, almost parallel lateral veins which are readily apparent, the lateral veins being substantially perpendicular to the midrib.

Leaf color:

Mature leaves.—Upper surface — dark green, Color No. 5747U; under surface much lighter in color than upper surface, being a pale green, Color No. 5767U.

New leaves.—Slightly lighter and brighter in color than mature leaves, upper surface — dark green, Color No. 575C.

Leaf texture: Tough, leathery; smooth; upper surface — non-glossy; lower surface — dull.

The Inflorescence

Position and abundance: Flowers cluster at twig or branch ends in terminal cymes, with cymes appearing at various positions from the lower part to the upper part of the plant.

Form: Single, regular; pediceled; petals united in a sympetalous corolla; salverform; tube spreads into five limbs or lobes; each flower is about 35 to 45 mm across; corona conspicuous at junction of tube and spreading limb, corona about 10 to 15 mm in diameter and much shorter than spreading limbs, the corona having five crownlike appendages, each appendage corresponding to a limb, most appendages being 6 to 9 toothed at their outer ends.

Buds: Limbs convolute in the bud, obliquely apiculate, the folds twisting counterclockwise when viewing down onto the tip of the bud, such the limbs of the flower twist slightly clockwise when viewing down into the flower.

Calyx: Of 5 persistent sepals, imbricate in the bud, lanceolate, acuminate, about 6 to 8 mm long.

Stamen: 5 stamens; filaments partly adnate to corolla tube; anthers with 2 basal tails, apex long-attenuate, hairy.

Color of flower: Limbs or petals of the corolla in new flowers are medium pink color, Color No. 211U with the margins being a pinkish red, Color No. 213U. As is the case with most oleanders, blooms produced under a full sun may be lighter in shade than those produced on cloudy days. As the flowers age, the color of the limbs fade somewhat becoming more pale than in the new growth. The corona is buff yellow, Color No. 155C, with groups of 3 dark pinkish red streaks, Color No. 192U, each group of pinkish red streaks being more or less centered with and corresponding to limb and to a said corona appendage, the streaks being radial in nature (as opposed to circular) such that the streaks extend from the edge of each appendage down into the corona tube, or vice versa. The outside of the corolla tube of each flower is pale pink, Color No. 210C, with the base of the corolla being pale yellow, Color No. 113U. The calyx and sepals are light maroon, Color No. 4995 C.

Color of buds: Dark pinkish red, Color No. 213U.

To further describe my new variety of *Nerium oleander*, it is very similar in size and growth habit to the other well-known intermediate size *Nerium oleanders* which grow in an upright manner, except for the color of the flowers, and except that my new variety appears to have a longer continuous blooming period than the other intermediate *Nerium oleanders* of similar color of which I am aware. My new variety also blooms much earlier, and later, than other intermediate *Nerium oleanders* of which I am aware and I am not aware of any *Nerium oleander* of an intermediate size having a flower which is the same as that produced by my plant. My new variety has a sweet fragrance, which is more intense in the morning.

Variety Name

The proposed variety name of my new plant is *Nerium oleander* "Turner's 5-387".

I claim:

1. A new and distinct variety of intermediate size *Nerium oleander* plant substantially as shown and described, having an upright habit of fairly rapid growth making it especially suitable for hedges, having an ability to be asexually reproduced, having the ability to flower substantially the entire year with long continuous blooming periods, having the ability to grow in full sun or in partial shade, being an excellent greenhouse plant, and being particularly characterized by its intermediate size combined with the unique color of its inflorescence, the flowers being a medium pink color, the margins being pinkish red, and with flowers having a sweet fragrance.

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