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*Lapageria*

*Philesiaceae*

[*Liliaceae* / *Smilacaceae*]

*Lapageria* commemorates Napoleon I's wife, Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie (1763-1814), who was brought up on a sugar plantation called *La Pagerie* in Martinique which was destroyed in 1766 hurricanes. On the death of her younger sister she travelled to France in 1779 and married Alexandre, Vicomte de Beauharnais, in succession to her sister, to keep Beauharnais money in the family and they had a son and daughter. She was imprisoned for the last three months of the French Revolution, during *La Terreur* engineered in Paris in 1794 by Robespierre (1758-1794) but was released, after her husband had been beheaded, on the day Robespierre himself went to the guillotine. In 1795, as a prominent society hostess in Paris, she met Napoleon Bonaparte, then a young Corsican general, and married him the following year. They were crowned Emperor and Empress of France in 1804 and were divorced in 1810 as Josephine had not produced an heir. She moved to Chateau de Malmaison outside Paris and retained her popularity with the public until her death. She proved to be an enthusiastic patron of botany.

Notes declare that this tree is one of two plants introduced to France and grown at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris where they languished for many years without flowering. Then coincidentally both plants produced blooms for the first time in their new country on the day in 1849 when Prince Louis Napoleon became President of the Republic. This one was named in honour of Prince Louis' aunt, the Empress Joséphine and the other (*Napoleonaea*) for his uncle, Napoleon I (1769-1821).