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## purple, *adj.* and *n.*

**Pronunciation:** <sup>2</sup> Brit. /'pə:pl/, U.S. /'pərp(ə)l/

### Forms:

α. Old English **purbble** (*Northumbrian*, inflected form), Old English **purple** (*Northumbrian*, inflected form), Middle English **pupel** (probably transmission error), Middle English **puppull** (probably transmission error), Middle English **purpalle** (perhaps transmission error), Middle English **purpyll**, Middle English **pvrpyl**, Middle English **pvrpyll**, Middle English–1500s **purpil**, Middle English–1500s **purpill**, Middle English–1500s **purpul**, Middle English–1500s **purpull**, Middle English–1500s **purpulle**, Middle English–1500s **purpyl**, Middle English–1500s **purpylle**, Middle English–1600s **purpel**, late Middle English– **purple**, 1600s **purpell**; *Scottish* pre-1700 **purpal**, pre-1700 **purpill**, pre-1700 **purpule**, pre-1700 1700s– **purple**.

β. late Middle English **porpell**, late Middle English **porpull**, late Middle English **porpyl**, late Middle English **porpyll**, late Middle English **pourpul**.

### Frequency (in current use):

**Origin:** A variant or alteration of another lexical item. **Etymon:** PURPURE *n.*

**Etymology:** Alteration of PURPURE *n.*, with dissimilation of liquid consonants (compare MARBLE *n.*, MARBLE *adj.*).

Compare Middle High German *purpul*, Swedish *purpul* (18th cent.).

For PURPURE *n.* the noun use was original, the adjectival use being later and derivative; but its alteration *purple* appears first in adjectival use, and is not attested as a noun until the end of the 14th cent. By the end of the 17th cent. *purple* had supplanted *purpure* as noun and adjective in all but specialized heraldic use.

The adjectival use of *purple* arose from the Old English noun (PURPURE *n.*); the Old English (*Northumbrian*) *purple hrægle* (see quot. OE at sense A. 1a) apparently showing, like the *purpre reaf* of the Hatton Gospels (see quot. c1200 at PURPURE *adj.* 1a), a weakened form either of the Old English genitive singular *purp(u)ran* 'of purple cloth', or of the derivative adjective *purpuren*: see discussion at PURPURE *n.* and *adj.*

In sense A. 1a corresponding to classical Latin *purpureus* (see PURPUREOUS *adj.*), ancient Greek *πορφύρεος* (see PORPHYRE *n.*).

With sense A. 3 compare earlier PURPURATE *adj.* 2, and also classical Latin *purpureus pannus* (see PURPLE PATCH *n.*).

### A. *adj.*

#### 1.

**a.** Originally: of a crimson shade obtained from mollusc dye (see sense B. 4), used in various ways as a distinguishing feature of the dress of emperors, senior magistrates, senators, and members of the equestrian class of ancient Rome, and of the imperial family of Byzantium. In later use: of a shade of red similar to this, worn by emperors, kings, cardinals, etc. Now chiefly *historical*.

OE (*Northumbrian*) *Rushw. Gospels: John* xix. 5 *Exiit ergo iesus portans spinieam coronam et purpuream uestimentum*: eode forðon ðe hælend berende ðyrnenne beg & purple hrægle fellereode wede [OE *Lindisf.* þæt purbble hrægl uel þæt felleread uoede, OE *West Saxon Gospels: Corpus Cambr.* *purpuren reaf*, c1200 *Hatton purpre reaf*].

- a1275 *St. Margaret* (Trin. Cambr.) l. 107 in A. S. M. Clark *Seint Maregrete & Body & Soul* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan) (1972) 34 Ciclatoun ant purpel [a1450 *Bodl.* purpure] pal scaltou haue to wede.
- c1330 ( ▶ ?a1300) *Arthour & Merlin* (Auch.) (1973) 6657 (*MED*) Gold and siluer and purpel pelles..þe paiens þer hadden late.
- c1390 *King of Tars* (Vernon) 358 in *Englische Studien* (1889) 11 42 In cloþ of riche purpel palle.
- ▶ ?a1439 J. LYDGATE *Fall of Princes* (*Bodl.* 263) vi. 123 (*MED*) Thou hast..Spared [not] ther crownys nor ther purpil weedis, Ther goldene sceptris.
- a1500 ( ▶ ?c1440) J. LYDGATE *Horse, Goose & Sheep* (Lansd.) 631 in *Minor Poems* (1934) ii. 565 His purpil [*v.r.* purpul] mantil, his garnement roiall.
- 1560 J. DAUS tr. J. Sleidane *Commentaries* f. clxxij<sup>v</sup> He consecrated Anthony..Cardinall of Medone, setting vpon his head a purple hatte.
- 1606 P. HOLLAND tr. Suetonius *Twelve Cæsars* (1899) I. 49 In his apparel he was noted for singularity, as who used to goe in his Senatours purple studded robe, trimmed with a jagge or frindge at the sleeve hand.
- 1670 J. MILTON *Hist. Brit.* ii. 87 His Purple Robe he [*sc.* Alectus] had thrown aside, lest it should descry him.
- 1755 E. YOUNG *Centaur* i, in *Wks.* (1757) IV. 110 As the Jews arrayed our blessed Lord in a purple robe, to mock him.
- 1791 W. COWPER tr. Homer *Odyssey* in *Iliad & Odyssey* II. xxi. 144 Telemachus..Cast off His purple cloak.
- 1841 R. W. EMERSON *Ess.* 1st Ser. (Boston ed.) vi. 164 I see well that for all his purple cloaks I shall not like him, unless he is at last a poor Greek like me.
- 1865 S. EVANS *Brother Fabian's Manuscript* 43 They..Laid by the sceptre, and crown, and ball, And the golden robe and the purple pall.
- 1910 *Encycl. Brit.* I. 471/2 Alaric..set up a rival emperor and invested the prefect of the city, a Greek named Attalus, with the diadem and the purple robe.
- 1962 W. G. HARDY *Greek & Rom. World* 86 The senators, the ruling class, alone had the right to wear a tunic with a broad purple stripe... The second order, the knights..wore a tunic with a narrow purple stripe.
- 1991 *Gazette (Montreal)* (Nexis) 14 Nov. A1 In 1953,..Cardinal Leger became one of the youngest 'princes of the church', kneeling before Pope Pius XII in Rome to receive the cardinal's purple robe.

**b. poetic and rhetorical.** Of a person: wearing or entitled to wear this colour; of imperial or royal rank. Now *rare*.

- 1635 F. QUARLES *Emblemes* ii. xv. 122 Dogs (far kinder than their purple Master).
- 1664 H. MORE *Modest Enq. Myst. Iniquity* 280 This Head of the Roman Hierarchy with his purple Cardinals are so Emperour-like and of such a Senatorious splendour.
- a1704 T. BROWN tr. A. Sylvius *Death Lucretia* in *Wks.* (1708) III. ii. 87 Shou'd my passive Body be pregnant by the purple Villain.
- 1753 T. GRAY *Hymn to Adversity* in *Six Poems* 24 Purple tyrants vainly groan.
- 1826 W. H. DRUMMOND *Bruce's Invasion Ireland* 66 'Tis the thunder that shakes purple tyrants with dread.
- 1896 H. BELLOC *July* in *Verse* 1954 6 The Purple Kings and all their mounted men..fill the street with clamorous cavalcade.
- 1946 E. MERRIAM *Family Circle* 22 We are the purple prince, haughty and handsome, Loving ourself.

## 2.

**a. Formerly:** of any generally red shade; (now) of a deep, rich shade intermediate between crimson and violet (cf. sense B. 2(c)).

*bluish, dark, dun, red purple*, etc.: see the first element.

- 1415 *Inventory* in *Archaeologia* (1918) 70 93 (MED) Vnum vestimentum simplex de serico puppull [*perh. read* puppull] lineatum de Tartaryn de eodem colore.
- c1425 *Bible* (Wycliffite, L.V.) (Bodl. 296) Exod. xxv. 4 Purpul [*a1425 Royal 3e schulen take gold, and siluer, and bras, iacynt and purpur and reed silk*].
- 1436 in F. J. Furnivall *Fifty Earliest Eng. Wills* (1882) 107 (MED) Y wol that Thomas Rothewell haue myn Prymour & myn purple gowne furred with martrons.
- a1500 in A. Zettersten *Middle Eng. Lapidary* (1968) 28 (MED) Þe Amatiste is a purpill colour & shynyng.
- 1605 J. SYLVESTER tr. G. de S. Du Bartas *Deuine Weekes & Wks.* I. iii. 95 The Violets purple, the sweet Roses stammell.
- 1696 J. AUBREY *Misc., Appar.* (1784) 117 This Stranger was in a purple-shag gown.
- 1747 W. GOULD *Acct. Eng. Ants* 45 A liquid tenacious Humour, in the midst of which is a small Purple or black Consistence, that contains or gives Life to the future Ant.
- 1792 S. ROGERS *Pleasures Mem.* I. 71 When purple evening tinged the west.
- 1810 W. SCOTT *Lady of Lake* III. 103 Heath-bell, with her purple bloom.
- 1879 O. N. ROOD *Mod. Chromatics* ii. 28 In the prismatic spectrum and in our normal spectrum we found no representative of purple, or purplish tints. This sensation..needs the joint action of the red and violet waves, or the red and blue.
- 1925 J. CONRAD *Suspense* I. i. 3 The open water too had a glassy look with a purple sheen.
- 1984 S. STEWARD & S. GARRATT *Signed Sealed & Delivered* vii. 147/1 You can..still enjoy watching your father turning purple with anger over his effeminacy.
- 2001 *Dallas Morning News* (Nexis) 21 June C4 A swipe of aluminum chloride at each prick point stopped any bleeding and erased..the purple dot.

**b. Chiefly Christian Church.** Of this colour as used symbolically at times of penitence and mourning.

- 1466 *Inventory* in *Archaeologia* (1887) 50 38 (MED) Item, j nothir purpyll chesebyll for gode fryday.
- ?1495 J. LYDGATE *St. Petronilla* (Pynson) l. 119 in *Minor Poems* (1911) I. 158 With purple wede to the heuenly mancyon Hir soule went vp the last day of May.
- 1542 *Inventory* in *Archaeologia* (1887) 50 46 Item a vestement purpull silke for good frydaye.
- a1624 BP. M. SMITH *Serm.* (1632) 146 Robes of scarlet, or purple, for depriments and detriments.
- a1739 C. JARVIS tr. M. de Cervantes *Don Quixote* (1747) III. II. vi. 236 A venerable old man, clad in a long mourning cloak of purple bays.
- 1853 *Waukesha (Wisconsin) Chronotype* 5 Oct. 1/5 We saw the funeral of a young maiden. At the head of the procession was a priest dressed in white and purple robes.
- 1868 W. B. MARRIOTT *Vestiarium Christianum* 174 The vestments..oftentimes..are purple, in times of fast, because of our mourning in respect of sin.
- 1910 *Encycl. Brit.* I. 234/1 In the Roman Catholic church Advent is still kept as a season of penitence... Purple vestments are worn in the church services.
- 1987 M. DORRIS *Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (1988) xii. 208 Father Hurlburt came back, dressed this time in his cassock and purple vestments.

2006 *N.Y. Times* (Nexis) 24 Mar. B5 Black and purple bunting was draped from the Clubhouse as a symbol of mourning.

**c. Chiefly poetic.** Of the colour of blood; bloody, bloodstained (*literal* and *figurative*).

In quot. 1878 *spec.* of crimson venous blood (the colour of arterial blood being scarlet).

- 1590 E. SPENSER *Faerie Queene* II. VI. sig. R6 A large purple stream adown their giambeux falles.
- 1595 W. SHAKESPEARE *Henry VI, Pt. 3* v. vi. 64 See how my sword weepes for the poore kings death. Now maie such purple teares be alwaies shed, For such as seeke the downefall of our house.
- 1605 *1st Pt. Jeronimo* sig. Dii<sup>v</sup> And by that slaue this purple act was done.
- 1653 DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE *Poems & Fancies* 185 [His] blood run warm, and trickling down his side, That where he stood, the grasse was purple dy'd.
- 1713 A. POPE *Windsor-Forest* 18 There purple Vengeance bath'd in Gore retires.
- 1768 T. GRAY *Triumphs of Owen* in *Poems* 104 Where he points his purple spear, Hasty, hasty Rout is there.
- 1805 W. SCOTT *Lay of Last Minstrel* I. x. 15 When Mathouse burn to Melrose ran, All purple with their blood.
- 1820 J. KEATS *Eve of St. Agnes* in *Lamia & Other Poems* 91 A thought came like a full-blown rose, Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart Made purple riot.
- 1878 M. FOSTER *Text Bk. Physiol.* (ed. 2) II. ii. §3. 267 Venous blood of a dark purple or maroon colour.
- 1904 R. BROOKE *Pyramids* in *Poet. Wks.* (1970) 191 So wind the nations in long pageant by, Over a pathway..Foul-stain'd and purple with the blood that's shed..For dreams of 'Empire'.

**3. figurative.** Characterized by richness or abundance; splendid, glorious; (of emotion) deeply felt or extravagantly expressed; (of literary composition) elaborate, excessively ornate (see *purple passage n.*, *purple prose n.* at Compounds 1b(c), and PURPLE PATCH *n.* 1).

- 1598 QUEEN ELIZABETH I tr. Horace *De Arte Poetica* in *Queen Elizabeth's Englishings* (1899) 142 Oft to beginnings graue and shewes of great is sowed A purple [L. *purpureus*] pace, one or more for vewe.
- 1697 J. DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Pastorals* II, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 8 All the Glories of the Purple Spring.
- 1748 T. GRAY *Ode* in R. Dodsley *Coll. Poems* II. 265 The rosy-bosom'd hours..wake the purple year!
- 1848 C. DICKENS *Dombey & Son* li. 510 Although this is but a dry reply to the Major's purple enthusiasm, the Major receives it graciously.
- 1872 J. S. BLACKIE *Lays of Highlands* Introd. 51 Places once flaunting with purple prosperity.
- 1894 *Pall Mall Gaz.* 20 Dec. 3/2 Who should I see..having a purple time of it but Padishah and Potter.
- 1905 *Daily Chron.* 19 May 6/3 You had one purple moment in your life—a sackful of coins, and scrambling them among boys.
- 1941 W. H. AUDEN *New Year Let.* II. 37 And yet to show complete conviction, Requires the purpler kinds of diction.
- 1975 C. N. MANLOVE *Mod. Fantasy* iii. 78 One [style] is 'purple' and highly emotive.
- 1990 *N.Y. Times* 22 Apr. 26/4 I have a purple passion for it [sc. my work].

**4. U.S. Politics.** Designating a state in which the Republican and Democratic parties have similar levels of support among voters; of or relating to such a state; (hence) politically moderate or centrist.

Frequently in **purple state**. Cf. BLUE STATE *n.*, RED STATE *n.* 2.

- 2002 *CNN* (transcript of TV programme) (Nexis) 20 May In the 2000 election year of red states or blue, Florida was purple. It is up for grabs, in play, a toss-up state, ergo a high traffic area for politicians.
- 2003 *Star-Tribune* (Minneapolis) 9 Feb. A2/3 Moderates locally and nationally are searching for a new purple agenda.
- 2004 *Associated Press Newswire* (Nexis) 2 Feb. I don't think it's a red or blue state... I think it's a purple state.
- 2008 W. FREY in R. Teixeira *Red, Blue & Purple Amer.* iii. 105 Political analysts should not lose their focus on still powerful, slow-growing purple states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Missouri.
- 2011 O. J. RODRIGUEZ *Vote Thieves* 120 The middle-of-the-road 'purple' voter typically has only an extreme choice—either scarlet red or indigo blue.

## B. *n.*

### 1.

**a. Purple cloth or clothing, esp. regarded as a luxury or form of ostentation; a purple robe or garment; = PURPURE *n.***

**purple and pall** = *purpure and pall* at PURPURE *n.* 1 (now archaic and poetic).

- c1390 in F. J. Furnivall *Minor Poems Vernon MS* (1901) II. 689 (*MED*) I-put he [sc. Job] was in pore array, Nouþer in purpul ne in pal, But in symple wede.
- a1450 *St. Katherine* (Richardson 44) (1884) 17 (*MED*) When þey entred yn, there come aȝenst hem..þe company of martirs clothed alle in purpul wyth reed roses vppon here hedes.
- a1500 (► a1460) *Towneley Plays* (1897–1973) 94 (*MED*) All wroght thay sylk to fynd them on; Marie wroght purpyll, the oder none bot othere colers sere.
- 1526 W. BONDE *Pylgrimage of Perfection* III. sig. eii The ryche Glotton..whiche was clothed in Purpull and clothe of Reynes.
- 1579 E. SPENSER *Shepherd's Cal.* July 173 Yclad in purple and pall.
- 1648 BP. J. HALL *Select Thoughts* 50 The rich glutton..clothed in purple, and byss.
- 1682 J. BUNYAN *Greatness of Soul in Wks.* (1853) I. 136 He could tend to do nothing but to find out how to be clothed in purple and fine-linen.
- 1765 J. OTIS *Vindic. Brit. Colonies* 12 His less faithful and less loyal fellow-servant is well fed, plump, gay, and cloathed in purple & scarlet & fine linnen.
- 1792 C. SMITH *Desmond* II. 124 His very servants cloathed in purple and fine linen, and testifying, by their looks, they fare sumptuously every day.
- 1850 'S. YENDYS' *Roman* i. 6 She wraps the purple round her outraged breast.
- 1894 W. E. GLADSTONE tr. Horace *Odes* II. xviii No well-born maidens, my poor doors within, Laconian purples spin.
- 1931 J. BUCHAN *Blanket of Dark* (1933) x. 221 He asked no reward. He did not seek..purple and fine linen.
- 1957 K. REXROTH *Coll. Longer Poems* (1968) 31 The leper king lies in a bed all Covered with purple and pall.
- 1965 *Aberdeen Univ. Rev.* Autumn 70 No ceremony is complete without the presence of the sacrist (or sacrists) robed in purple, with a tricorn hat trimmed with gold upon his head.



1994 *Sports Illustr.* 25 Apr. 28/2 Moon is the first marquee quarterback in purple since Fran Tarkenton retired in 1979.

**b. spec.** Purple or purple-trimmed clothing as the distinguishing dress of emperors, kings, etc. (see sense A. 1a). Also *figurative*, esp. with *the*: imperial or royal rank, power, or office. Also: purple clothing as worn for imperial and royal mourning (cf. sense A. 2b).

- c1425 J. LYDGATE *Troyyes Bk.* (Augustus A.iv) v. 2527 (MED) Pirrus..gan anon to araie hym newe, Al in purpil, whiche, as clerkes telles, Is for kynges & for no wyȝt elles.
- 1553 R. EDEN in tr. S. Münster *Treat. Neue India* Ded. sig. aaij<sup>v</sup> No lesse confoundinge the order of thinges, then he whiche cloteth an ape in purple, & a king in sackcloth.
- 1610 P. HOLLAND tr. W. Camden *Brit.* I. 271 Constantine..laid aside the purple and..became a Priest.
- 1698 J. CROWNE *Caligula* II. 16 Princes are slaves in purple, slaves in grain.
- 1728 E. CHAMBERS *Cycl.* at *Mourning* The antient Spartan and Roman Ladies mourn'd in White;..Kings and cardinals mourn in Purple.
- 1776 E. GIBBON *Decline & Fall* I. xiv. 400 As soon as Diocletian and Maximian had resigned the purple.
- 1818 W. HAZLITT *Polit. Ess.* 327 The line of distinction which separates the regal purple from the slabbering-bib, is sometimes fine indeed.
- 1865 *Mountain Democrat* (Placerville, Calif.) 2 Dec. 1/3 The emperor was on his throne,..sceptre in hand, a crown on his head, and robed in imperial purple.
- 1903 'M. FIELD' *Julia Domna* III. p. xli (*stage direct.*) Caracalla throws open the door. He wears the purple & a crown of gold rays.
- 1960 A. DUGGAN *Family Favourites* vii. 126 Eutychianus found the Emperor an apt pupil, because he was teaching him real things, things which would help him to hold the Purple.
- 1970 *Globe & Mail* (Toronto) 28 Sept. 7/4 Rural India returned to the purple with a bang in the 1967 general elections. A prince on a platform meant thousands of votes.
- 2004 S. J. LEINBACH tr. F. Meijer *Emperors don't die in Bed* vii. 124 In the last weeks of his life Constantine no longer wore the imperial purple and the diadem, but went about in the white garment of the 'newborn'.

**c. With *the*.** The official scarlet dress of a cardinal; (*figurative*) the rank, state, or office of a cardinal, the cardinalate.

- 1670 G. HAVERS tr. G. Leti *Il Cardinalismo di Santa Chiesa* III. III. 304 Without Bribery, or Subornation, he had attain'd to the dignity of the Purple.
- 1695 *London Gaz.* No. 3046/1 We are told that the present Duke of Modena..intends to quit the Purple, and to send back his Cardinals Cap to the Pope.
- 1753 S. RICHARDSON *Hist. Sir Charles Grandison* VI. iv. 12 Celibacy in the Clergy is an indispensable law of your church: Yet a Cardinal has been allowed to lay down the purple, and marry.
- 1783 W. THOMSON in R. Watson & W. Thomson *Hist. Reign Philip III* VI. 414 The necessity of exchanging the ease of former familiarity for those ceremonies of respect which were due to the purple... The presence of the cardinal was uneasy to him.
- 1818 *Gentleman's Mag.* 88 227 The Pope..sent him to the Court of Spain, during which Nunciature he was promoted to the purple.
- 1898 L. VILLARI tr. P. Villari *Life & Times Machiavelli* (new ed.) II. vi. 237 He was raised to the purple.

- 1913 W. WARD *Life Cardinal Newman* (ed. 3) I. iii. 102 The death of Leo XII. prevented his elevation to the purple.
- 1949 *Dixon* (Illinois) *Evening Tel.* 8 Feb. 8/4 Prosecutor Elapi said Cardinal Mindszenty..had committed 'horrible crimes' regardless of whether he wore 'the purple of a cardinal or is clad in rags'.
- 1992 *Guardian* (Nexis) 11 Apr. II. 24 A Cardinal..presented himself to the magnificent panoply of his peers to be welcomed and blessed and chanted and enrobed into the purple.

**d. born to (also in) (the) purple:** born into an imperial or royal reigning family. Also in extended use.

Often associated with sense B. 1b; but cf. also quot. 1788 and PORPHYROGENITE *n.*

- 1681 tr. E. Scholasticus Epiphaniensis *Eccl. Hist.* VI. xxiv. 526/2 (*note*) The most noble Theodosius was born in purple on the third year of Mauricius's Empire.
- 1703 D. WILLIAMSON *Serm. preached Edinb.* 54 I cannot but lament the unhappy fate of the Princes who are born in purple, and bred in Luxury.
- 1788 E. GIBBON *Decline & Fall* (1790) IX. xlviii. 57 In the Greek language *purple* and *porphyry* are the same word:...an apartment of the Byzantine palace was lined with porphyry: it was reserved for the use of the pregnant empresses: and the royal birth of their children was expressed by the appellation of *porphyrogenite*, or born in the purple.
- 1827 H. HALLAM *Constit. Hist. Eng.* II. x. 125 [Richard Cromwell] would probably have reigned as well as most of those who are born in the purple.
- 1884 LABOUCHERE in *Fortn. Rev.* Feb. 208 True Liberals who have not had the good fortune to be born in the Whig purple.
- 1937 O. ST. J. GOGARTY *As I was going down Sackville St.* (1989) 239 I was not born to the purple.
- 1963 F. C. CREWS *Pooh Perplex* 104 No doubt when you have been born to the purple and never had to do a day's honest work, you prefer worshipping frivolousness to facing the eternal moral questions.
- 1994 *New Yorker* 19 Sept. 40/3 The hero, a young lion named Simba, is born to the purple.

**2.** Any of various colours ranging in shade between red and violet. (a) A shade of crimson, *spec.* (also **Tyrian purple**) the colour of a dye obtained from various gastropod molluscs (cf. senses B. 4, B. 5) and traditionally used for fabric worn by people of imperial or royal rank (cf. sense A. 1a) (now *historical*). (b) Formerly: †any of various shades of red; cf. PURPURE *n.* 2 (*obsolete*). (c) Now: a colour obtained by mixing red and blue in various proportions, and usually containing also some black or white, or both; *esp.* a deep rich shade between crimson and violet.

The various tints are frequently distinguished by the names of flowers, fruits, etc., in which they occur, as *aubergine*, *pansy*, *plum-purple*; also by special names, as *carmine*-, *pontiff*, *royal purple*, etc.: see the first element.

- ‡a1439 J. LYDGATE *Fall of Princes* (Bodl. 263) I. 5773 (*MED*) Adonydes..lay slayn..Whom Venus turned to a ful fressh flour Which was as blood, lich purpil off colour.
- a1475 (‡a1447) O. BOKENHAM *Mappula Angliae* in *Englische Studien* (1887) 10 8 (*MED*) Muskellis, wherein be fovndene noble margarites of alle-maner colovres, as red, purpulle, Jacinctyne, & prassyne.
- 1535 *Bible* (Coverdale) Song of Sol. vii. 5 The hayre of thy heade is like the kynges purple folden vp in plates [R.V. tresses].

- a1586 SIR P. SIDNEY *Arcadia* (1593) v. sig. Qq3 Not that purple which we now haue..but of the right Tyrian purple, which was neerest to a cullour betwixt our murrey and skarlet.
- a1649 W. DRUMMOND *Wks.* (1711) 131 As the Rose, at the fair appearing of the Morning Sun, displayeth and spreadeth her Purples.
- 1673 M. LISTER *Let.* 25 Oct. in H. Oldenburg *Corr.* (1975) X. X. 304 The parenchymous juices of ye Roots of red Carrots & Beets, are of as deep a Purple as those contained within ye Parenchyma of ye berries of ligustrum.
- 1697 J. DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Aeneis* v, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 337 The Victor honour'd with a nobler Vest: Where Gold and Purple strive in equal Rows.
- 1720 J. OZELL et al. tr. R. A. de Vertot *Hist. Revol. Rom. Republic* I. vii. 422 The first Prætor of Rome..was allowed the Prætexta, or Robe edged with Purple.
- 1774 O. GOLDSMITH *Hist. Earth* V. 347 Their plumage is glossed with a rich purple.
- 1815 LD. BYRON *Destr. Sennacherib* i His cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.
- 1873 'S. COOLIDGE' *What Katy did at School* xiii. 275 Painted in soft purples and grays.
- 1927 V. WOOLF *To Lighthouse* I. xvii. 163 Her eyes had been going in and out among the curves and shadows of the fruit, among the rich purples of the lowland grapes.
- 1950 *Cape Argus* 5 Aug. 7/5 Vygies or sour figs..blossom in a wide range of colours—scarlet, blue, purple, pink or flaming yellow.
- 1992 *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* Mar. 61/1 The colour was officially announced as royal purple but is called simply purple in the Gibbons' catalogues.

### 3.

†**a. Medicine.** Any dark red or purplish lesion of the skin. *Obsolete. rare* after 15th cent.

- 1440 *Promptorium Parvulorum* (Harl. 221) 417 Purplys [?a1475 *Winch.* Purplus], sorys, morbuli purpurei dicuntur.
- ?c1475 *Catholicon Anglicum* (BL Add. 15562) f. 100<sup>v</sup> A Pvrpyll, *pabula* [1483 *BL Add.* 89074 *papula*].
- c1490 in *Notes & Queries* (1878) 9 343 (*MED*) Yf yt [sc. the potion] be drokyn be-fore eny pvrpyl a-pere, By þe grase of god ther schall be no perell of no dethe.
- 1755 S. JOHNSON *Dict. Eng. Lang.* *Purples* (without a singular) spots of a livid red, which break out in malignant fevers.
- 1899 *Lancet* 7 Feb. 305/1 He believed that it had been the cause of much of the mortality previously ascribed to gaol fever and 'malignant fever with purples'.

**b. Medicine.** In †*singular* and *plural*. Any of various diseases characterized by a dark red or purplish rash (in later use, esp. by a petechial rash). Cf. *PURPURA* *n.* 2, *PURPLE FEVER* *n.* Now *historical*.

- ?1515 *Hyckescorner* (de Worde) sig. B.iiij<sup>v</sup> God punyssheth..with grete sekenesse As pockes pestylence, purple and axes.
- ?1537 T. ELYOT *Castell of Helthe* iv. vi\*. f. 79 Whan they [sc. children] waxe elder, thanne be they greeued with..purpyls, measels, and smalle pockes.
- 1638 R. BAKER tr. J. L. G. de Balzac *New Epist.* II. 194 I am glad at heart to heare the Duke of Feria is dead of the Purples.
- 1660 A. WOOD *Life & Times* (1891) I. 349 It is thought it is the spotted feaver or purples.



- 1730 T. FULLER *Exanthematologia* II. 377 Upon the Purples appearing the Doctor gave..some Alexipharmacs... They all recovered.
- 1772 J. GOUGH tr. J. M. B. de la M. Guyon *Life Lady Guion* II. 33 My daughter had the small-pox and the purples.
- 1866 A. FLINT *Treat. Princ. Med.* 857 The term purpura, or the purples, denotes an affection characterized by a truly petechial eruption, or petechiæ.
- 1906 *Man* 6 186 [To treat] Purples.—Remove the skin of a tender red coconut and insert in it a pill.
- 1973 T. PYNCHON *Gravity's Rainbow* I. 115 She..lives nearby at the home of a Mrs. Quoad, a lady widowed long ago and since suffering a series of antiquated diseases—greensickness, tetter, kibes, purples, imposthumes.

**c. Agriculture.** In *plural*. A disease of wheat caused by the nematode *Anguina tritici* and characterized by small galls on the grains; ear-cockle. Also: a gall characteristic of this disease. Now *rare*.

- 1807 A. YOUNG *Gen. View Agric. Essex* I. VII. iv. 302 Purples..a distemper in wheat which I had never before heard of.
- 1890 E. A. ORMEROD *Man. Injurious Insects* (ed. 2) 104 'Cockle-galls', or 'Purples', are the small roundish or distorted growths, sometimes found in Wheat which give an appearance to the ear much as if purplish or dark coloured peppercorns had taken the place of Wheat grains.
- 1926 F. D. HEALD *Man. Plant Dis.* xxviii. 833 Nematode disease of wheat... In England it is commonly called 'purples', because of the color of the galls and also 'false ergot'.

**d. Veterinary Medicine.** In *plural*. Swine fever; (perhaps also) swine erysipelas. Now *rare*.

- 1867 *Lancet* 13 July 39/1 For the past eighteen months 'purples' has been very rife among pigs... I think there is much resemblance between this disease and human purple fever.
- 1887 *Times* 1 Feb. 9/6 Swine fever..being known in different parts of Great Britain by the names of pig typhoid, pig distemper, purples, swine plague [etc.].
- 1905 *Lancet* 6 May 1214/1 During the period of this epidemic a somewhat similar disease called 'purples' was said to have been rife amongst pigs.
- 1967 H. HILL & E. DODSWORTH *Food Inspection Notes* (ed. 7) 40 Swine Fever. Known as 'Red Soldier' 'Purples', or 'Hog Typhoid'.

**4. A purple dye or pigment; spec. (also *Tyrian purple*)** a crimson dye obtained from the hypobranchial gland of various gastropod molluscs found in the Mediterranean (cf. sense B. 5), the principal coloured component of which is dibromoindigo (now *historical*). Frequently with distinguishing word denoting the source, composition, inventor, etc.

*aniline, London, mineral, Perkin's, sea, visual purple*, etc.: see the first element. **purple of Cassius** *n.* [ < the name of Andreas Cassius (d. 1673), German physician and chemist] a purple pigment consisting of a colloidal mixture of metallic gold and tin(IV) oxide.

- 1519 W. HORMAN *Vulgaria* viii. f. 81<sup>v</sup> Scryueners write with blacke, redde, purple, gren blewe or byce.
- 1596 J. DAVIES *Orchestra* sig. C2 The bashfull bride, Which blusheth like the Indian Iuorie Which is with dip of Tyrian purple died.

- 1656 A. COWLEY *Dauides* III. 112 in *Poems* The Purple of the Ancients was taken out of a kind of Shell-fish called Purpura.
- 1686 W. COLE (*title*) *Purpura Anglicana*, being a Discovery of a Shell-fish Found on the Shores of the Severn, in which there is a Vein containing a Juice, giving the delicate and durable Tincture of the Antient, Rich, Tyrian Purple.
- 1705 tr. *Whole Art of Dying* 188 The less of these ingredients is used, the blewer and darker will the Dye be the same may be said of Grey Purples and Violets.
- [1782 W. NICHOLSON *Introd. Nat. Philos.* II. 224 A beautiful purple powder, called the purple powder of Cassius, which is of use in enamels.]
- 1803 *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) **93** 312 By recent muriate of tin we have, with a solution of gold, the well known purple of Cassius.
- 1815 J. SMITH *Panorama Sci. & Art* II. 751 Deep Prussian blue and lake..form a purple of the next degree of excellence.
- 1880 *Academy* 20 Nov. 368/3 Carminic acid and Tyrian purple.
- 1963 J. OSBORNE *Dental Mech.* (ed. 5) xxii. 412 'Purple of Cassius' is used to produce the pink gum colour.
- 1992 *Chem. in Brit.* **28** 341/3 Heating magenta dyestuffs..could give new dyes—such as the phenylated rosanilines, Regina purple..and Bleu de Lyons.

**5.** Any of several Mediterranean gastropod molluscs of the families Muricidae and Thaididae which yielded the dye Tyrian purple (cf. sense B.

4). Also: any of various other molluscs belonging (esp. formerly) to the genus *Purpura* (family Thaididae); esp. the common dog whelk, *Nucella lapillus*. Cf. PURPURA n. 1.

The Tyrian dye is believed to have been obtained mainly from *Bolinus* (or *Murex*) *brandaris*, but a number of other species were also used.

- 1580 C. HOLLYBAND *Treasure French Tong* *Pourpre*,...a shell fish called a Purple.
- 1601 P. HOLLAND tr. Pliny *Hist. World* I. 306 Purples also be caught by means of some stinking bait.
- 1682 T. CREECH tr. Lucretius *De natura rerum* VI. 215 The Purple's blood gives Wool so deep a stain That we can never wash it out again.
- 1715 tr. G. Panciroli *Hist. Memorable Things Lost* I. i. i. 5 The Tyrians, by taking away the Shells of the greater Purples, do come at that noble Juice.
- 1755 *Gentleman's Mag.* Jan. 32/2 It belongs to yet another tribe, and is a Purple.
- 1856 P. H. GOSSE *Tenby* vi. 66 The central part..is the pasture-ground of the Purples (*Purpura lapillus*), whose massive white shells may be seen stuck over the Mussels and Barnacles.
- 1901 E. STEP *Shell Life* 254 The Purple (*Purpura lapillus*), commonly known as Dog-winkle, and in Ireland as Horse-winkle, is one of the commonest of marine snails.
- 1990 *Biblical Archaeologist* **53** 99/3 Dyeings made solely with sea purples are called *conchyilia* by Pliny.

## **6.** Chiefly poetic. A purple flower. Now rare.

Recorded earliest in *long purples* n. at LONG *adj.*<sup>1</sup> and *n.*<sup>1</sup> Compounds 4c.

- 1604 W. SHAKESPEARE *Hamlet* IV. vii. 141 Therewith fantastique garlands did she make Of Crowflowers, Nettles, Daises, and long Purples.
- 1702 *Elysium* 131 There is Floras Ward-robe that Cloaths all the Subjects of her gay and green Dominion, the Flowers, Purples, Violets, Lillies, Daffodilles..[etc.].

1840 R. BROWNING *Sordello* v. 295 Plucking purples in Goito's moss.

1905 *Academy* 18 Nov. 1198/1 I took his bunch of purples, and I charmed his heart away.

†7. *poetic*. Blood. Cf. sense A. 2c. *Obsolete*.

In quot. a1631 also with implication of sense B. 1b.

a1631 J. DONNE *Hymne to God in Poems* (1635) 388 May the last Adams blood my soule embrace. So, in his purple wrapp'd receive mee Lord.

1804 R. COUPER *Poetry* II. 61 Tibb snyted Madge's muckle nizz, Till out the purple sprang.

8.

a. Sexually explicit writing. Cf. BLUE *n.* 11, BLUENESS *n.* 3. *rare*.

1930 D. H. LAWRENCE *A Propos Lady Chatterley's Lover* 9 I should show the public that here is a fine novel, apart from all 'purple' and all 'words'.

b. *Journalists' slang*. **to sub the purple**: to subedit elaborate or excessively ornate writing. Cf. *purple passage n.* at Compounds 1b(c). *rare*.

1958 E. A. ROBERTSON *Justice of Heart* iii. 33 A well-known outside contributor from whose copy he had, in his own words, 'subbed the purple'.

9. *slang*. (a) = PURPLE HEART *n.* 3. (b) Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), used as a recreational drug; cf. *purple haze n.* at Compounds 1b(c). Now *rare*.

1968 C. DRUMMOND *Death & Leaping Ladies* v. 112 I heard her on at the Doc..about some Purples to key them up but he hit the ceiling.

1971 E. E. LANDY *Underground Dict.* 156 Purple, LSD.

## COMPOUNDS

### C1. Compounds of the adjective.

#### a.

#### (a) Parasynthetic. Frequently in the names of animals and plants.

#### purple-backed *adj.*

1829 E. GRIFFITH et al. *Cuvier's Animal Kingdom* VII. 483 Purple-backed Maccaw.

1903 *Emu* 3 36 *Malurus assimilis* (Purple-backed Wren)..not uncommon on coast and inland.

1925 W. J. BRYAN & M. B. BRYAN *Mem. William Jennings Bryan* II. iv. 246 This oration we found in an old purple-backed notebook written in a cramped, boyish hand.

2005 *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio) (Nexis) 10 Nov. E15 A phenomenal number of the purple-backed swallows..had drifted far from their summer habitat in Texas and New Mexico.

**purple-berried adj.**

- 1732 *Philos. Trans.* 1731–2 (Royal Soc.) 37 174 *Ligustrum Lauri folio, fructu violaceo*. The purple-berried Bay.
- 1868 M. COLLINS *Sweet Anne Page* I. 241 The golden-fruited and purple-berried leafage.
- 1964 *Post Standard* (Syracuse, N.Y.) 11 Oct. 24/3 When fences are embroidered with crimson- and purple-berried woodbine and the mountain tops are a haze of leaf color.
- 2008 J. KELLUM *Southern Shade* 66 (caption) The fruit browns as it ages. This isn't a problem of the native purple-berried species.

**purple-coated adj.**

- 1833 W. G. SIMMS *Bk. my Lady* 148 If yon purple-coated cloud wins my eye and kindles my fancy, let me survey it.
- 1906 *Westm. Gaz.* 3 July 1/3 The scarlet- or purple-coated seminarists pause for breath.
- 2006 *Sunday Mail* (Australia) (Nexis) 29 Jan. 96 They spot him on the road home, walking along with a purple-coated old lady.

**purple-crested adj.**

- 1746 J. BLACKSTONE *Specimen Botanicum* 51 Purple crested cow-wheat.
- 1881 O. WILDE *Poems* 215 White-shielded, purple-crested rode the Mede.
- 1912 *Manitoba Morning Free Press* 17 Sept. 18/1 Twenty-five purple-crested Odd Fellows, directed by several red or white-crested officers.
- 1992 D. LESSING *Afr. Laughter* 148 Birds swooped about, notably the purple-crested lourie, with its creaking fateful cry.
- 2005 D. L. WAGNER *Caterpillars Eastern N. Amer.* 47 The sting of the Purple-crested Slug is mild.

**purple-crowned adj.**

- 1829 E. GRIFFITH et al. *Cuvier's Animal Kingdom* VIII. 90 Purple-crowned Pigeon.
- 1957 *Condor* 59 85 *Heliothrix barroti*. Purple-crowned Fairy. One male with a fairly short tail was collected on August 14.
- 2003 *Wanderlust* Apr.–May 58/1 The noisy rainbow and purple-crowned lorikeets..are often spotted dancing about when the eucalyptus flower.

**purple-eyed adj.**

- 1787 *Bot. Mag.* 1 35 Purple-eyed Succory-Hawkweed... Miller..improperly describes the centre of the flower as black.
- 1877 *Harper's Mag.* May 897/2 Pale, pale primroses, and daisies pied, And violets, purple-eyed, that peep between.
- 2005 *Denver Post* (Nexis) 31 July L6 Its yellow flowers are purple-eyed. They are all pretty. There really is no such thing as a bad verbascum.

**purple-faced adj.**

- 1771 T. PENNANT *Synopsis Quadrupeds* p. xvi Dog-faced Monky..Lion-tailed..Ouanderou..Purple-faced..White.  
 1841 C. J. LEVER *Charles O'Malley* lxxxviii A large purple-faced old major.  
 1958 R. GARNETT tr. B. Heuvelmans *On Track of Unknown Animals* iv. 94 This description probably refers to the purple-faced langur of Ceylon (*Kasi vetulus*).  
 2001 *Daily Tel.* 18 Jan. 28/3 The unlovely former MP threw a purple-faced hissy fit.

### purple-flowered adj.

- 1629 J. PARKINSON *Paradisi in Sole* 301 This purple flowred Vipers grasse hath long and narrow leaues.  
 1732 R. BRADLEY *Gentleman & Farmer's Guide* (ed. 2) 171 The purple-flowered Kind I suppose are received with the more Pleasure.  
 1846 D. J. BROWNE *Trees Amer.* 22 (heading) *Magnolia purpurea*, The Purple-Flowered Magnolia.  
 1992 *Frederick (Maryland) News* 27 Oct. A10/1 Seedlings of..yellow-flowered alfalfa grow about as vigorously as most commercial varieties of the far more common purple-flowered alfalfa.  
 2010 J. PHELAN *What is Life?* vii. 255 Crosses that entailed the fertilization of plants with purple flowers by pollen from other plants with purple flowers produced *mostly* purple-flowered offspring.

### purple-hearted adj.

- 1866 S. H. BRADBURY *Lyrical Fancies* 41 Send the purple-hearted June, With its flushed and mellow eves!  
 1910 *Daily Chron.* 25 Mar. 6/5 The minute purple-hearted blossoms.  
 1992 P. ROBINSON *Entertaining Fates* vi. 87 The flimsy-petalled, purple-hearted poppies.  
 2012 F. DUNLOP *Every Grain Rice* (2013) 328/3 This vegetable (*Amaranth tricolor*)..has thin stems with a profusion of small purple-hearted leaves.

### purple-hued adj.

- a1475 ( ▶ 1430) J. LYDGATE *Minor Poems* (1911) i. 174 This daysye, with leves rede and white, Purpul hewed.  
 1598 W. SHAKESPEARE *Henry IV, Pt. 1* ii. i. 75 None of these mad mustachio purplehewd maltworms.  
 1866 *Galaxy* 15 Sept. 136 It was just at the close of a delicious, purple-hued Autumn afternoon that she welcomed Ichabod home.  
 1906 *Jrnl. Royal Anthropol. Inst.* 37 208 Their colour is a little more purple-hued than that of the Egyptians.  
 2006 *Boston Globe* (Nexis) 12 Apr. E1 A purple-hued puree of red beans and walnuts is enhanced with chopped parsley, mint, and dill.

### purple-leaved adj.

- 1748 W. LEWIS tr. *Pharmacopoeia Royal Coll. Physicians Edinb.* 39 Labdanum... The gum of the purple-leaved Cretan ladaniferous cistus.  
 1883 *Science* 29 June 611/2 The seed of the purple-leaved variety of *Berberis vulgaris*..reproduced the purple-leaved peculiarity to an extent which it could not do more perfectly if the variety were a true species.  
 1971 *Country Life* 17 June 1521/3 The purple-leaved filbert..responds well to stooling.  
 2001 S. A. ROTH *Taylor's Guide Trees* 273 This small tree [sc. the purple-leaved plum] is one of the most cold-hardy purple-leaved plants available.



**purple-lidded** *adj.*

- 1869 *Temple Bar* Oct. 303 One thin hand lifted to shield her weary purple-lidded eyes.
- 1914 A. LOWELL *Sword Blades & Poppy Seed* 233 The purple-lidded night Westering comes, her footsteps light.
- 2000 *Eastern Courier* (Austral.) (Nexis) 14 June 22 The waste company..has admitted that separating the materials in that pretty purple-lidded bin is a joke.

**purple-nosed** *adj.*

- 1590 W. CLEVER *Flower of Phisicke* 93 They are also purple-nosed and hayrie about the breast.
- 1868 'RADICAL FREELANCE' *Philosophers of Foulfouville* ix. 203 'That reminds me', said a lanky, purple-nosed individual, who looked like a 'longshoreman, 'that I actually see one on 'em myself'.
- 1913 J. CONRAD *Chance* I. i. 8 He envied the purple-nosed old cab-drivers on the stand.
- 2002 P. A. HUCHTHAUSEN *October Fury* i. 48 A wire that locked the hand plate on the upper front of the purple-nosed torpedo.

**purple-skirted** *adj.*

- 1832 W. C. BRYANT *Poems* (new ed.) 157 Purple-skirted clouds curtain the crimson air.
- 1960 W. H. H. NORMAN tr. A. Ryūnosuke in D. Keene *Mod. Japanese Lit.* xix. 331 He clutched his purple-skirted knee with both hands.
- 1993 *Chron.-Telegram* (Elyria, Ohio) 30 Mar. A4 A Cinderella purple-skirted ballgown with a matching short jacket.

**purple-spiked** *adj.*

- 1714 *Philos. Trans.* 1713 (Royal Soc.) 28 205 Purple spiked Willowherb... The flowers purple, and are thickset in long spikes with round pointed Capsules.
- 1822 S. CLARKE *Hortus Anglicus* II. 260 Purple-spiked Milk Vetch.
- 1997 *Post-Standard* (Syracuse, N.Y.) 19 July D2 The herb garden is a visual treat, with purple-spiked meadow sage and gold-leafed oregano.

**purple-spotted** *adj.*

- 1596 R. JOHNSON *Famous Hist. Seauen Champions* x. 90 By that time the purple spotted morning had parted with her gray.
- 1688 R. HOLME *Acad. Armory* 106 At the tops stand many small single Flowers close set together, which in some are white, others purple spotted in the middle.
- 1788 J. WOODFORDE *Diary* 8 July (1927) III. 36 To Mr. Aldridge for 6 Yards of purple spotted Cotton.
- 1880 *Harper's Mag.* June 66 The swamp-cabbage flower..peers above the ground beneath his purple spotted hood.
- 1952 A. G. L. HELLYER *Sanders' Encycl. Gardening* (ed. 22) 277 *L[ilium]..daliense*, white, purple-spotted.
- 1996 R. MABEY *Flora Britannica* 291/2 Hemlock's purple-spotted stems often exceed six feet in height.

**purple-stemmed** *adj.*

- 1878 T. HARDY *Return of Native* II. vii, in *Belgravia* Apr. 268 A dense brake of purple-stemmed brambles had grown to such vast dimensions as almost to form a dell.
- 1923 *Science* 30 Nov. 450/1 The injury affected both green-stemmed and purple-stemmed plants.
- 1995 *Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch* 23 Aug. F1/4 Plates of salad greens on Vietnamese tables inevitably include rau que, the purple-stemmed licorice variety.

**purple-throated** *adj.*

- 1825 C. WATERTON *Wanderings in S. Amer.* ii. 114 The little forked-tail purple-throated humming-birds.
- 1961 O. L. AUSTIN *Birds of World* 203/2 The smaller 11-inch Purple-throated Fruit-crow ranges from Costa Rica southward through the Amazon region.
- 2003 *Science* 25 Apr. 545/3 A bizarre sexual dimorphism occurs in the purple-throated carib hummingbird.

**purple-topped** *adj.*

- 1759 P. MILLER *Gardeners Dict.* at *Turnep* The round red or purple topped turnip.
- 1845 J. W. ORD *Rural Sketches & Poems* 153 Lovely is the prospect, rich and rare, Wild and subdued,—black heath all purple-topped.
- 1905 *Missouri Bot. Garden Ann. Rep.* 122 Humphrey reports it [sc. crucifer mildew] growing on purple topped white turnips.
- 2005 *Boston (Mass.) Mag.* (Nexis) Sept. Purple-topped wine caps spring up locally in wood chip piles but don't take well to traditional seasonings.

**purple-zoned** *adj.*

- 1862 J. G. WHITTIER in *Atlantic Monthly* Apr. 423 Purple-zoned, Wachuset laid His head against the West.
- 1891 *Atlantic Monthly* May 641 No tongue has any name For the despair I saw enthroned In my love's eyes, all purple-zoned!
- 2000 *Sunday Times* (Nexis) 23 Jan. For pots and containers, try the following varieties: 'Cherry Orbit' (intense red blooms and purple-zoned foliage); [etc.].

**(b) Modifying colour words to form adjectives and nouns.**

See also PURPLE-RED *n.* and *adj.*

**purple-black** *n.* and *adj.*

- 1610 W. BALDWIN et al. in *Mirour for Magistrates* (new ed.) Induction sig. Civ At length appeared clad in purple blacke Sweete Somnus.
- 1688 R. HOLME *Acad. Armory* II. xii. 264/2 The feathers of the upper surface of the Wings are of a shining purple black.
- 1727 J. G. SCHEUCHZER tr. E. Kämpfer *Hist. Japan* v. 514 A very beautiful sort of an *Adiantum*..with shining purple black stalks.
- 1849 *Littell's Living Age* 21 July 120/2 She had..beautiful silken hair, of that purple black which poets call hyacinthine.
- 1868 G. MACDONALD *Robert Falconer* II. 44 Purple-black heartseases, and thin-filmed silver pods of honesty.

- 1925 *Jrnl. Amer. Folklore* **38** 135 A purple-black seed, in appearance very like an ox-heart cherry.
- 1958 *Mansfield (Ohio) News Jrnl.* 7 Sept. 28/1 Grapes, in cool greens or juicy purple-blacks..are piled high in brass bowls.
- 2002 E. A. GARGAN *River's Tale* viii. 258 I watched the slow bruising of the eastern sky, a purple-black swelling on the horizon mushrooming into gray breakers.

### purple-blue *adj.*

- 1633 T. JOHNSON *Gerard's Herball* (new ed.) II. 764 The floures stand forked in the tops of the branches like those of dead Nettle, or of Clarie, of a purple blew colour.
- 1728 R. BRADLEY *Dict. Botanicum* at *Crocus vernus luteus versicolor alter* The three outer Petals are striped..with a paler, Purple-blue, shining Colour.
- 1845 J. R. LOWELL in *Harbinger* 2 Aug. 122/3 Far away on Katahdin thou towerest, Purple-blue with the distance.
- 1922 *Times* 31 July 9/6 Jade green always looks well and allows of purple-blue or peacock trimmings.
- 2003 *Horticulture* May–June 62/3 *Clematis*×*durandii* with abundant purple-blue flowers thrive in congregations of rustic tuteurs, some as tall as 14 feet.

### purple-bronze *n.*

- 1870 *One Hundred Years' Progress of U.S.* x. 507/2 The glittering iridescence of the insect's wings, or the gold and purple bronze which glistens on its armor.
- 1958 *Van Wert (Ohio) Times-Bull.* 14 June 2/3 The stems and veins of the leaves are tinted a purple-bronze.
- 1992 H. MITCHELL *One Man's Garden* vi. 144 The plant has leaves the size of salad plates borne on stems a foot high or so, and they are oily, glossy green flushed with purple-bronze.

### purple-brown *adj.* and *n.*

- 1693 N. STAPHORST tr. L. Rauwolf *Trav. Eastern Countries* I. ix, in J. Ray *Coll. Curious Trav.* I. 105 Between them sprout out purple-brown Flowers.
- ?1735 *Pract. Husbandman & Planter* II. 146 The purple Brown is the ripest, the bright White coming out of some of the Top Seed-Vessels is next.
- 1835–6 *Todd's Cycl. Anat. & Physiol.* I. 553/1 A..layer of a dark purple-brown pigment.
- 1868 H. ALFORD *Poet. Wks.* 350 The gleaming trunks give place in the distance To the rich purple brown of the winter trees in the sunlight.
- 1932 R. KIPLING *Limits & Renewals* 309 Area by area, she was painted with dazzle-patterns of greenish-yellow and purple-brown.
- 2003 *N.Y. Times Bk. Rev.* 23 Mar. 26/4 Ayahuasca..is a DMT-rich drug that looks like purple-brown spit.

### purple-crimson *adj.* and *n.*

- 1601 P. HOLLAND tr. Pliny *Hist. World* I. 91 Shell fishes that yeeld the purple crimson colour.
- 1688 R. HOLME *Acad. Armory* II. vi. 108/2 Wood-earth Nuts, of a purple crimson.
- 1800 *Compl. Young Man's Compan.* 431 Lake being of rather a purple crimson, is more transparent than Carmine.

- 1891 A. AUSTIN *Human Trag.* (ed. 4) IV. 291 She had but caught From this weird hour the purple-crimson glow.
- 1955 *Chron.-Telegram* (Elyria, Ohio) 10 June 10/5 The foliage is a deep purple crimson from spring until fall.
- 2006 *Geelong* (Austral.) *Advertiser* (Nexis) 13 May 49 Youthful purple crimson colour displaying sweet blackberry fruit, pepper and mint spiciness on the nose.

### purple-dark adj.

- 1864 W. J. COURTHOPE *Three Hundredth Anniv. Shakespeare's Birth* 14 The green-leaf palace 'neath her sober wing Grows purple-dark.
- 1928 V. WOOLF *Orlando* vi. 243 The wine-blue purple-dark hill.
- 1986 O. P. ADISA in S. Brown *Caribbean New Wave* (1990) 3 He wanted to be purple-dark like the rest of them so his face wouldn't turn red like the colour of sorrel fruit whenever he got angry.

### purple-green adj.

- 1707 J. PECHEY *Compl. Herbal* (ed. 2) 151/1 It has..Leaves like those of Sweet-Marjoram, but broader and greater, of a purple green Colour.
- 1858 *Agitator* (Tioga County, Pa.) 23 Dec. It was quite as bad as Mr. Tittlebat Titmouse's predicament about his purple-green hair.
- 1940 *Proc. Royal Soc. B.* **129** 235 The stems are purple and leaves purple green.
- 2005 *N.Y. Times* (National ed.) 17 Mar. D6/3 Tatsoi, kyona mizuna and Osaka purple, a tangy mustard green with a sturdy purple-green leaf, are a few of the many Asian greens being offered this year.

### purple-grey adj.

- 1793 J. LESLIE tr. Comte de Buffon *Nat. Hist. Birds* IV. 360 He found that the Purple-gray Cotinga is the young bird, and that it takes at least eighteen months to acquire its full colour.
- 1879 *Bismarck* (Dakota Territory) *Tribune* 30 Aug. The gathering dusk..was falling in a purple-grey vail of tissue over wood and lawn.
- 1930 J. DOS PASSOS *42nd Parallel* 147 Purplegray murk rose steadily.
- 1996 G. WARD *Hawaii: Rough Guide* I. 24 The staple food was poi, a purple-grey paste produced by pounding the root of the taro plant.

### purple-pink n. and adj.

- 1797 G. HUMPHREYS *Museum Calonnianum* 23 Cream-coloured ground with circular marbled and dotted bands of purple pink.
- 1856 'G. ELIOT' in J. W. Cross *George Eliot's Life* (1885) I. vii. 401 The *Corallina officinalis*..with its purple-pink fronds.
- 1884 *Science* 10 Oct. 352/1 The petals were..pale green, edged with purple-pink, in color.
- 1964 M. HYNES *Med. Bacteriol.* (ed. 8) 484 A colony subcultured on to the medium gives a purple-pink colour from NH<sub>3</sub> production in 2–8 hours.
- 1997 J. UPDIKE *Toward End of Time* 135 A weeping cherry tree..making its annual splash of purple-pink against the chilly white of a star magnolia.

**purple-rose** *adj.* and *n.*

- 1856 W. GIBBS & F. A. GENTH in *Smithsonian Contrib. Knowl.* (1857) 9 v. 19 The crystals exhibit a remarkable dichroism, the ordinary image being of a fine purple rose color, while the extraordinary image is a bright orange red.
- 1882 *Garden* 22 July 65/2 Varying in colour from a deep purple-rose to a delicate rose-pink.
- 1928 S. F. HARRISON *Later Poems & Villanelles* 2 Rhodora's clusters purple-rose in hue.
- 2006 *National Post* (Canada) (Nexis) 13 Apr. (Post Homes section) 4 The foliage of this particular variegated variety..changes from marbled bronze-red and pinkish-white to purple-rose in the fall.

† **purple-yellow** *n.* *Obsolete*

- 1882 *Garden* 2 Sept. 207/3 Agaricus violaceus, a splendid purple-yellow, growing among dead leaves.

**(c) Adverbial.**† **purple-beaming** *adj.* *Obsolete*

- 1760 F. FAWKES tr. Anacreon *Odes* in tr. Anacreon *Wks.* lxiv. 4 Safely shroud Me in a purple-beaming Cloud.
- ?1760 J. LANGHORNE *Poems Several Occasions* 30 While Beauty's Parent gilt the rosy Morn, Play'd on the Stream, or purple-beaming Flower.

**purple-dawning** *adj.*

- 1715 N. ROWE *Lady Jane Gray* iv. i. 46 Thus gloomy Ghosts, whene'er the breaking Morn Gives notice of the chearful Sun's Return,..shrink before the Purple-dawning East.
- 1991 S. SOHMER *Patriots* in *San Francisco Chron.* (Nexis) 17 July E4 In the purple dawning light, the mottlings of his years lay on his cheek and brow like coats of tempera.

**purple-glowing** *adj.*

- 1884 N. F. DAVIN *Eos* 11 Comes with shining robes the Morning, Orange-tinted, purple-glowing.
- 1917 W. M. SALTER *Nietzsche Thinker* xiii. 155 He waits for..astronomers of the ideal who will reveal to us purple-glowing constellations.
- 1996 *Musical Times* Nov. 19/2 She 'inadvertently' reveals the hidden picture of a sickly emaciated hand clutching an obscure purple-glowing 'object'.

**purple-staining** *adj.*

- 1813 W. BINGLEY *Animal Biogr.* (ed. 4) III. 465 The purple-staining whelk.
- 1899 *Bot. Gaz.* 28 342 The pollen grains at first are quite small, and possess thin purple-staining walls.
- 1985 *Syracuse* (N.Y.) *Herald-Jrnl.* 1 July B15/3 For decades the standard medical treatment for a yeast infection was painting the vagina with gentian violet—a messy, purple-staining medication.
- 2004 *Manila Bull.* (Nexis) 1 Apr. He has fruit trees like..duhat tree which always yielded plenty of the bitter-sweet and purple-staining fruit.



† **purple-streaming** *adj. Obsolete*

- 1595 S. DANIEL *First Fowre Bks. Ciuile Warres* II. cxxii. sig. M2<sup>v</sup> Her fieldes engrain'd with bloud, her riuers dide With purple streaming wounds of her owne rage.
- 1622 P. HANNAY *Nightingale* 222 As the ruddy bashfull Morne Did leave Dan Phoebus purple streaming bed,..I to my fairest Coelia's chamber sped.
- 1727 J. THOMSON *Summer* 19 The Purple-streaming Amethyst is thine.
- 1817 F. SAYERS *Poet. Wks.* (1830) 158 O give me oft to view Thy purple-streaming light.
- 1899 J. DAVIDSON *Last Ballad* 53 The lickerish crowd agape to dip their mouths In purple-streaming agony.

† **purple swelling** *adj. Obsolete*

- 1617 B. JONSON *Vision Delight* (1640) II. 19 *Favonius*, father of the Spring,..Had rowsd him here, and shooke his feathers, wet With purple swelling Nectar.
- 1791 M. ROBINSON *Poems* I. 14 There I'll press from herbs and flow'rs Juices..Whose magic potency can..thro' the purple swelling vein With subtle influence steal.

**b.**

(a) In names of animals characterized by a purple or purplish colouring.

† **purpleback** *n. Obsolete rare* the purple-backed thornbill, *Ramphomicron microrhynchum*, a South American hummingbird the male of which has a purple back and green underparts.

- 1887 R. B. SHARPE *Gould's Trochilidæ* Suppl. Pl. 38 *Zodalia Ortoni*. Quito Purpleback.

† **purple bird** *n. Obsolete = purple swamphen n.*

- 1735 in E. Albin *Nat. Hist. Birds* (1738) III. Pl. 84 (*caption*) *Porphyrio*. The Purple Bird.
- 1852 G. BUSH *Notes Crit. & Pract. Bk. Leviticus* 104/1 The Sept[uagint] renders this by πορφυριώνα, the purple bird, a bird very famous among the ancients for the beauty of its plumage.

† **purple bullfinch** *n. Obsolete rare = purple finch n.*

- 1862 J. RICHARDSON et al. *Mus. Nat. Hist.: Zool.* 364/2 The Purple Bullfinch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) is of a deep-crimson colour, with the wings and tail black, and the belly white.

**purple coot** *n. now rare = purple swamphen n.*

- 1864 T. C. JERDON *Birds India* III. 714 The Purple Coot is found throughout all India and Ceylon.
- 1959 *Systematic Zool.* 8 18 An essential character..is a single character enabling the species to be recognized by it alone, e.g., the violet plumage (*corpus violaceum*) of the purple coot (*F. Porphyrio*).

† **purple crow** *n. Obsolete rare* any of several small crows with iridescent plumage found in Indonesia and Australasia.

Apparently only attested in dictionaries or glossaries.

1889 *Cent. Dict.* at *Crow*<sup>2</sup> n. *Purple crow*, one of several species or conspecies of small lustrous crows of the East Indies and Papua.

† **purple egg** n. *Obsolete rare* (also **purple egg-urchin**) = *purple sea urchin* n.

1859 S. G. GOODRICH *Illustr. Nat. Hist. Animal Kingdom* II. 625 There are the various kinds [of sea urchin] called..the Common Egg-Urchin, *Echinus sphæra*..., the Purple Egg-Urchin, *E. lividus*, [etc.].

1890 *Cent. Dict.* *Purple-egg*, a common sea-urchin, *Strongylocentrotus drobachiensis*.

**purple emperor** n. (more fully **purple emperor butterfly**) a large nymphalid butterfly of deciduous woodland in Eurasia, *Apatura iris*, the male of which has mainly black wings with purple iridescence.

1742 B. WILKES *Twelve New Designs Eng. Butterflies* Pl. 6 (*caption*) The Purple Emperour Butterfly, taken in the Fly State.

1766 M. HARRIS *Aurelian* 6 I was confirmed in my Opinion of its being the Purple Emperor, by observing that the square Points of the under Wings projected beyond the rounded Extremity of the upper ones.

1810 G. CRABBE *Borough* viii. 110 Above the sovereign Oak, a Sovereign skims, The purple Emp'ror, strong in Wing and Limbs.

2000 *Wildlife News* Jan. 17/2 We took the civil servants and consultants to Bernwood Forest to show them the purple emperor butterflies bombing about.

**purple finch** n. a common North American finch, *Carpodacus purpureus*, the male of which has mainly rose-red plumage.

1731 *Philos. Trans.* 1729–30 (Royal Soc.) 36 431 *Fringilla purpurea*, the purple Finch.

1876 J. BURROUGHS *Winter Sunshine* I. 31 Those purple finches..are they not stealing our berries?

2000 *Independent* 24 Jan. I. 1/1 Outside the window, purple finches..and bright red cardinals peck at the seed he has set out.

**purple gallinule** n. (a) = *purple swamphen* n.; (b) (also **American purple gallinule**) a similar but smaller North American rail, *Porphyrio* (or *Porphyryla*, or *Gallinula*) *martinica*, with more iridescent plumage and yellow legs.

1782 T. MARTYN *Heads of Course of Lect. Nat. Hist.* 12 (*table*) Gallinule. [Species:] Common. Purple.

1814 A. WILSON & G. ORD *Amer. Ornithol.* IX. 71 The Purple Gallinule [was seen] in a thick swamp, a short distance from Savannah, Georgia.

1888 *Riverside Nat. Hist.* IV. 131 The purple-gallinules..typified by the European species (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) and the American *Ionornis martinica*.

1909 W. VERNER *My Life among Wild Birds in Spain* II. i. 99 I have..been startled by the curious cry of the big Purple Gallinule.

1960 in *Brit. Birds* 53 147 (*title*) The American Purple Gallinule breeds in the southern and south-eastern United States.

**purple grackle** *n.* a North American grackle (family Icteridae), the male of which has glossy purplish plumage on the head, now regarded as a common grackle of the nominate subspecies *Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*.

1782 J. LATHAM *Gen. Synopsis Birds* I. 462 Purple Grakle.

1811 A. WILSON *Amer. Ornithol.* IV. 30 The Red-winged Starlings..are..sometimes associated with the Purple Grakles.

1999 *Field Guide Birds N. Amer.* (National Geographic Soc.) (ed. 3) 438 Smaller 'Purple Grackle', *quiscula* of the southeast, has a narrow bill, purple head, bottle green back, and blue tail.

**purple heron** *n.* a large, slender Old World heron, *Ardea purpurea*, which has a reddish-buff head and neck and reddish-purple underparts.

1785 J. LATHAM *Gen. Synopsis Birds* III. I. 96 Purple H[eron]... Size of the common H[eron].

1837 J. GOULD *Birds Europe* IV. Pl. 274 The food of the Purple Heron consists of fish, frogs, mice, and insects.

1995 *New Scientist* 2 Dec. 52/1 A purple heron is a splash of colour and grace on the edge of a marsh.

**purple martin** *n.* a large North American martin, *Progne subis* (the male of which has dark, glossy purplish-blue plumage) which is now dependant on artificial accommodation for nesting.

1731 *Philos. Trans.* 1729–30 (Royal Soc.) 36 432 *Hirundo purpurea*, the purple Martin.

1812 A. WILSON *Amer. Ornithol.* V. 62 The Purple Martin, like his half-cousin the King-bird, is the terror of Crows, Hawks, and Eagles.

1998 *Independent on Sunday* 25 Oct. (Culture section) 8/5 The purple martin no longer nests in natural sites, but is dependent on a million US citizens for its accommodation.

**purple sandpiper** *n.* a small wading bird, *Calidris maritima* (family Scolopacidae), that breeds in Iceland, Greenland, and some other Arctic and subarctic regions and has predominantly dark grey plumage in winter.

1802 G. MONTAGU *Ornithol. Dict.* at *Sandpiper—Purple* Purple Sandpiper.

1860 S. F. BAIRD *Birds N. Amer.* I. 717 The purple sandpiper..is frequently met with on the shores of the Atlantic.

1996 *Scotland's Nat. Heritage* Mar. (Cairngorms Suppl.) 14/2 Rarities such as purple sandpipers and Lapland bunting nest occasionally.

**purple sea urchin** *n.* any of several sea urchins with purple or purple-tipped spines, esp. *Paracentrotus lividus* of the east Atlantic, *Arbacia punctulata* of the west Atlantic, and *Strongylocentrotus purpuratus* of the east Pacific.

1874 A. E. VERRILL & S. I. SMITH *Rep. Invertebr. Animals Vineyard Sound* 112 The purple sea-urchin, *Arbacia punctulata*, is..quite common in many localities.

- 1900 *Overland Monthly* Apr. 369/1 The purple sea-urchin (*Strongylocentrotus purpuratus* [sic])..is abundant on the west coast from La Paz, Mexico, to Alaska.
- 1971 D. NICHOLS & J. A. L. COOKE *Oxf. Bk. Invertebr.* 178 Psammechinus (Purple Sea-urchin). This hardy little urchin lives under rocks and overhangs.

**purple shell** *n.* (a) = sense B. 5 (now *historical*); †(b) a violet sea snail of the genus *Janthina* (*obsolete rare*).

- 1675 E. SHERBURNE in tr. M. Manilius *Sphere* 22 He finding on the Sea-shore an empty Murex or purple shell, is said to have wound it like a Horn.
- 1736 S. HUMPHREYS tr. N. A. Pluche *Spectacle de la Nature* III. 12 The most full of Prickles among these last Kinds, as the Purple-Shell., are of those whom the Ancients called Purples, or Purple-Fishes.
- 1850 I. LEESER tr. J. Schwarz *Descriptive Geogr. & Hist. Sketch Palestine* 197 Cheifa..was called Purpureon during the dominion of the Greeks and Romans, because the purple shell was often found and taken in the vicinity.
- 1885 *Standard Nat. Hist.* I. 325 (caption) *Ianthina*, purple shell, with the float supporting the eggs.
- 2001 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 352 Purple shell fishing was carried on in many fishing grounds along the coast of the Peloponnese..., Euboea, [etc.].

**purple swampen** *n.* a large rail, *Porphyrio porphyrio*, which has deep purplish-blue plumage, a large red bill, and long red legs, found widely throughout the Old World; also called *purple gallinule*, *swampen*, (*New Zealand*) *pukeko*.

- 1949 *Condor* 51 204 A Palau resident which I happened not to find is the Purple Swampen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*.
- 1982 R. ELLIS *Bush Safari* 124 Purple Swampens strutted like large bantams along mud banks.
- 2000 *Guardian* 18 Feb. II. 20/2 Bill also catches sight of the purple swampen, a giant version of the moorhen with some very odd eating habits.

† **purple-tailed parakeet** *n.* *Obsolete* the sapphire-rumped parrotlet, *Touit purpurata*, of tropical South America, which has a blue rump and a mostly crimson tail.

- 1781 J. LATHAM *Gen. Synopsis Birds* I. 315 Purple-tailed Parrakeet.

**purple urchin** *n.* = *purple sea urchin n.*

- 1855 P. H. GOSSE *Man. Marine Zool.* I. 61 The Purple Urchin (*E[chinus] lividus*) excavates hollows for itself in limestone rock, in which it resides.
- 1931 *Jrnl. Ecol.* 19 421 The most conspicuous animal form is *Paracentrotus lividus* (Lam.), the spiny purple urchin.
- 1962 *Ecology* 43 309/1 The purple urchin, *Arbacia punctulata*., has a range from Yucatan to southern New England.

**purple water-hen** *n.* now *rare* a rail of the genus *Porphyrio* or a related genus; *spec.* = *purple swamphen* *n.*

- 1790 *Nat. Hist.* in J. White *Jrnl. Voy. New S. Wales* App. 238 To this genus belongs..a very beautiful exotic species called the Purple Water-hen, which is the Fulica porphyrio of Linnæus.
- 1883 A. NEWTON in *Encycl. Brit.* XVI. 808/2 Allied to all these is the genus *Porphyrio*, including the bird so named by classical writers, and perhaps a dozen other species often called Sultanas and Purple Water-hens.
- 1930 W. M. MANN *Wild Animals in & out of Zoo* App. 1. 320 *Porphyrio caeruleus* (Purple water hen).

**purple whelk** *n.* now *rare* any of several dog whelks of the genus *Nucella* (or *Thais*); cf. sense B. 5.

- 1681 N. GREW *Musæum Regalis Societatis* 1. VI. i. 129 The Purple-Wilk with long plated Spikes.
- 1816 *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) **106** 307 It somewhat resembles the secretion obtained from the buccinum lapillus, or purple whelk.
- 1879 *Globe Encycl.* V. 263/1 *Purpura*, a genus of Gasteropodous Molluscs..represented by the Common Purple Whelk (*P. lapillus*) of the British coasts.
- 1937 *Amer. Midland Naturalist* **18** 198 *Thais emarginata*, the purple whelk, bores through the mussel shells and extracts the soft parts.

**(b)** In the names of plants having purple flowers, leaves, etc.

**purple amaranth** *n.* any of several amaranths; *esp.* the prince's feather, *Amaranthus cruentus*, and the slender amaranth, *A. blitum*, cultivated for its edible leaves.

- 1722 T. FAIRCHILD *City Gardener* 36 The Great Purple Amaranth, or Princes Feather, will make a large Plant, if it likes the Ground.
- 1769 J. DICKS *New Gardener's Dict.* at *Leaf* The leaves of the purple amaranth, whose upper surfaces were next the water, continued fresh three months.
- 1935 *Ann. Missouri Bot. Garden* **22** 532 *Amaranthus paniculatus*... Purple Amaranth.
- 2002 *Times Colonist* (Victoria, Brit. Columbia) (Nexis) 28 Mar. B5 Dan Jason recommends the purple amaranth..and advises using the succulent, nutty young leaves raw for the first few weeks and then using the plants as a source of cooking greens.

† **purple apple** *n.* *Obsolete rare* any of various tropical trees of the genus *Annona* (family Annonaceae); = CUSTARD APPLE *n.* 2.

- 1754 P. MILLER *Gardeners Dict.* (ed. 4) s.v. *Guanabanus* *Guanabanus fructu purpureo*. *Plum. Nov. Gen.* The Purple-apple.
- 1788 J. LEE *Introd. Bot.* (ed. 4) App. Purple apple, *Annona*.

**purple beech** *n.* (more fully **purple beech tree**) an ornamental variety of the beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, with purplish leaves.



- 1792 *Catal. Hot-house, Green-house, & Hardy Plants, Shrubs, & Trees* (Dicksons & Co., Edinburgh) 68  
Fagus..purpurea... Purple beech tree.
- 1906 *Bull. Torrey Bot. Club* **33** 81 Not infrequently in the purple beech the young leaves will be of a distinct purplish-red color and almost entirely free from chlorophyl.
- 2005 *N.Y. Times* (Nexis) 5 Aug. E7/1 I love purple beech for its aubergine leaves, which turn bronze in late summer.

**purple-berried bay** *n.* now *historical* an evergreen tree of the family Oleaceae that has purple berries, variously identified with privet (genus *Ligustrum*) and devilwood ( *Osmanthus americana*).

- 1732 Purple-berried Bay [see *purple-berried adj.* at Compounds 1a(a)].
- 1767 W. STORK *Acct. E. Florida* 3 The Purple-berried Bay is called by Catesby a Ligustrum..but Dr. Solander says it is a species of olive: it is a beautiful evergreen tree.
- 1943 *Trans. Amer. Philos. Soc.* **33** 196 Bay, purple berried..devilwood (*Osmanthus americana*).

**purple bottle** *n.* *rare* <sup>†</sup>(*a*) a purple-flowered plant, perhaps the cornflower, *Centaurea cyanus* (*obsolete*); (*b*) (in full **purple bottle moss**) a moss, *Splachnum ampullaceum*, with a reddish urn-shaped receptacle (apophysis).

- 1650 W. HOW *Phytologia Britannica* 33 *Cyanus purpureus multiflorus*, Ger. double purple Bottles. Variat flore albo.
- 1796 W. WITHERING *Arrangem. Brit. Plants* (ed. 3) III. 792 *S. ampullaceum*..Purple Bottle-moss.
- 1934 *Webster's New Internat. Dict. Eng. Lang.* *Purple bottle*, any moss of the genus *Splachnum*, esp. *S. ampullaceum*, in which the flask-shaped apophysis is highly colored.

**purple broomrape** *n.* *rare* the broomrape *Orobanche purpurea* of Eurasia and North Africa, which has bluish-purple flowers and is parasitic on yarrow.

- 1797 J. E. SMITH *Eng. Bot.* VI. 423 *Orobanche cærulea*. Purple Broom-rape.
- 1996 *Times* (Nexis) 7 Oct. (Home News section) Proposed improvements to the dock threaten the nationally rare yarrow or purple broom rape.

<sup>†</sup> **purple chamomile** *n.* *Obsolete rare* the plant pheasant's eye, *Adonis annua* (see note to *red maythe n.* at MAYTHE *n.* 2a).

- 1548 W. TURNER *Names of Herbes* sig. B.iv They call it in Englishe red mathes, alij, red mayde wed, alij, purple camomyle.

**purple coneflower** *n.* any of several North American perennial plants constituting the genus *Echinacea* (family Asteraceae ( Compositae)), esp. *E. purpurea*, which has flowers with a prominent dark central disc and purplish, downward-pointing rays around its edge.

- 1848 A. GRAY *Man. Bot. Northern U.S.* 223 *Echinacea*, Moench. Purple Cone-flower.
- 1939 *National Geographic Mag.* Aug. 220/2 Striking contrast is provided by some of the most brilliant flowers of the prairie notably..the purple coneflower, the butterfly milkweed.., and the prickly pear.
- 1989 *Australasian Post* (Melbourne) 26 Aug. 20/2 If every Australian took extracts of the echinacea plant—commonly known as the purple cone flower—then absenteeism from colds and flu would be halved.

**purple cow-wheat** *n.* rare the hemiparasitic European plant field cow wheat, *Melampyrum arvense*, which has pink-purple flowers and grows in cornfields and field margins; cf. COW-WHEAT *n.* 1.

- 1752 C. ALSTON *Index Medicamentorum* 67 Purple Cow-wheat. *Usu.* Herb. Melanthium.
- 1800 J. E. SMITH *Flora Britannica* II. 652 *Melampyrum arvense*..Purple Cow-wheat.
- 1962 H. KAMEN tr. B. Pasternak *In Interlude* 63 Purple cow-wheat, gold Saint John's wort, Rosebay, thistle, camomile—As though enchanted by a spell They gaze on her.

† **purple-flowered moneywort** *n.* *Obsolete* bog pimpernel, *Anagallis tenella*.

- 1754 R. BROOKES *Introd. Physic & Surg.* 222 With a pentapetaloid flower... Money-wort or Herb-two-pence, purple-flowered Money-wort, round-leaved Water Pimpernel [etc.]
- 1800 T. GARNETT *Observ. on Tour through Highlands* I. 268 A considerable part of the skirts of Dun-y is covered with the *Anagallis tenella*, or purple-flowered money-wort.

**purple gromwell** *n.* the gromwell *Lithospermum purpureocaeruleum*, found in limestone areas of Eurasia and having purple flowers which turn blue; also called *blue gromwell*.

- [1775 R. WESTON *Flora Anglicana* 98 *Lithospermum..officinale purpureum...* Purple-flowered Gromwell.]
- 1783 W. CURTIS *Catal. Brit. Plants* 95 *Lithospermum purpureo-cæruleum*. Gromwell purple.
- 1912 J. W. WHITE *Flora of Bristol* 436 Purple Gromwell—Native; in woods and thickets, on limestone.
- 1979 *Monumenta Nipponica* **34** 294/2 For the sake of a single shoot Of purple gromwell, I look upon All the grasses of Musashino With fondness.

**purple groundsel** *n.* = *purple ragwort n.*

- [1794 T. MARTYN tr. J. J. Rousseau *Lett. Elements Bot.* (ed. 4) xxvi. 390 The gardens have a purple African groundsel from the Cape; an annual plant with a yellow disk, and purple rays.]
- 1794 *Bot. Mag.* 7 238 *Senecio Elegans*. Purple Groundsel, or Ragwort.
- 1852 *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) **142** 513 Among petals, the most remarkable I have observed are those of the purple groundsel.
- 1988 C. J. WEBB et al. *Flora of N.Z.* IV. 273 Purple groundsel is sometimes cultivated for its attractive capitula especially in coastal localities.

**purple honeysuckle** *n.* †(*a*) red clover, *Trifolium pratense*; or the inflorescence of this plant (*obsolete rare*); (*b*) any of several shrubs or trees having purplish flowers resembling those of common honeysuckle, *Lonicera percllymenum*; (*c*) any of several purple-flowered honeysuckles (genus *Lonicera*).

- 1657 J. BEALE *Herefordshire Orchards* 53 Ashes we find excellent to beget the white and purple Honeysuckle.  
 1767 *Compl. Grazier* xviii. 103 Great Clover... That is best which is brought from Flanders, and bears the great red or purple honeysuckle.  
 1851 *Chambers's Papers for People* XIX. 14 Some of the timber-trees bear fruit; others rich clusters of flowers, like the purple honeysuckle.  
 1906 *Cent. Dict.* The purple honeysuckle or azalea is *Rhododendron nudiflorum*.  
 1997 H. L. FLINT *Landscape Plants E. N. Amer* (ed. 2) 343/2 'Purpurea' (Hall's purple honeysuckle, Kansas purple honeysuckle) has purple tinted foliage and flowers that are dark red-purple on the outside.  
 2000 M. J. EBERHART *Ten Million Steps* 185 In some small coves here, and blooming very early, are the flame azaleas and the pinxter flower (purple honeysuckle).

† **purple jacobaea** *n.* *Obsolete* = *purple ragwort n.*

- 1757 P. MILLER *Gardener's Kalendar* (ed. 11) 260 Plants now in Flower in the Pleasure-Garden... Purple Jacobæa.  
 1789 W. AITON *Hortus Kewensis* III. 193 Elegant Groundsel, or Purple Jacobea. Nat[ive] of the Cape of Good Hope.  
 1890 *Cent. Dict.* at *Ragwort* *Purple Ragwort*, the purple jacobæa, *Senecio elegans*, a handsome garden species from the Cape of Good Hope.

**purple lily** *n.* any of various lilies or lily-like plants having blue or purple flowers; *spec.* †(*a*) the martagon lily, *Lilium martagon* (*obsolete*); †(*b*) *Australian* any of various blue- or purple-flowered flaglike plants of the genus *Patersonia* (family Iridaceae) (*obsolete rare*).

- 1578 H. LYTE tr. R. Dodoens *Nieuwe Herball* II. xliii. 202 The red purple Lillie..Some call the greatest kinde *Martagon*.  
 1775 tr. *Valuable Secrets Arts & Trades* 191 A receipt to dye marble, or alabaster, in blue or purple. 1. Pound together, in a marble mortar, parsnips and purple lilies, with a sufficient quantity of white-wine vinegar.  
 1884 W. MILLER *Dict. Eng. Names Plants* 228/1 *Patersonia*, Purple Lily, or Native Flag, of Australia.  
 2005 *Frederick (Maryland) News-post* 3 Apr. D1/4 Yellow daffodils and purple lilies all blossoming in the spring sunshine.

**purple loosestrife** *n.* a herbaceous perennial, *Lythrum salicaria* (family Lyraceae), with distinctive spikes of purple flowers, which is commonly found in wetland areas and is often regarded as an invasive weed; cf. **LOOSESTRIFE** *n.* 1b.

- 1548 W. TURNER *Names of Herbes* sig. E.ijv *Lysimachia purpurea*..may be called in englishe red loostryfe, or purple losestryfe.
- 1785 T. MARTYN tr. J.-J. Rousseau *Lett. Elements Bot.* xx. 284 Purple Loosestrife is a handsome plant.
- 1861 R. BENTLEY *Man. Bot.* II. iii. 538 *Lythrum Salicaria*, Purple Loosestrife, is a common British plant.
- 2002 *U.S. News & World Rep.* 13 May 61/2 Herbariums are used..to track the march of invasive species like purple loosestrife, which clogs lakes in the upper Midwest.

**purple medick** *n.* the fodder plant alfalfa, *Medicago sativa*.

- 1793 T. MARTYN *Flora Rustica* III. §76 It [sc. yellow medick] may probably turn out not to be superior to the purple Medick or Lucern.
- 1915 F. S. HARRIS & G. STEWART *Princ. Agronomy* xxi. 257 It [sc. Alfalfa] is Arabic and means best fodder... A few of the other names are Mexican clover..., purple medick, cultivated medicago [etc.].
- 1974 *Encycl. Brit. Micropædia* I. 230/3 *Alfalfa*, also called lucerne and purple medic, a perennial clover-like plant (*Medicago sativa*) of the pea family.

**purple melic** *n.* now rare (more fully **purple melic grass**) = MOOR

GRASS *n.* 1(b).

- 1776 W. WITHERING *Bot. Arrangem. Veg. Great Brit.* I. 48 Ropegrass with a simple nodding panicle, and the blossoms not fringed—Panicle red... Purple melic grass... In the Isle of Rasa they make this grass into ropes for fishing nets.
- 1804 C. SMITH *Conversations* II. 108 In a few short months..Would velvet moss and purple melic rise.
- 1937 S. F. ARMSTRONG *Brit. Grasses* (ed. 3) 136 *Molinia caerulea*, Moench. (Purple Melick-grass, Flying Bent)... This plant is common on damp moors, peaty soils, woods, etc. in Britain.

**purple milk-vetch** *n.* a dwarf Eurasian milk-vetch, *Astragalus danicus*, bearing clusters of purple flowers and occurring in calcareous grassland and dunes.

- 1737 P. MILLER *Gardeners Dict.* (ed. 3) s.v. *Astragalus* English Purple Milk-Vetch of the Mountains.
- 1918 W. GRAVESON *Brit. Wild Flowers* (1919) xiv. 120 The Purple Milk Vetch growing on these downs has similar growth..to that of the Horse-shoe Vetch.
- 2005 *Herald* (Glasgow) (Nexis) 9 May 26 The purple milk-vetch, a small perennial herb which grows on sandstone sea cliffs in Scotland, has been classified as 'endangered'.

**purple moor-grass** *n.* see MOOR GRASS *n.* 1(b).

**purple mullein** *n.* †(a) moth mullein, *Verbascum blattaria* (*obsolete*); (b) a southern European mullein grown for ornament, *V. phoeniceum*, having flowers in various shades of purple, red, etc.

- 1578 H. LYTE tr. R. Dodoens *Nieuwe Herball* I. lxxxii. 122 Of Blattaria, or Mothe Mulleyn... From the middle of those leaues doo spring up two or three stems, bearing fayre yellow floures, (and sometimes also it beareth purple flowers)... It may be called in English Purple, or Mothe Mulleyn.

- 1799 LADY C. MURRAY *Brit. Garden* I. 169 V. *Phoeniceum*. Purple Mullein... Flowers from May to July... Native of the South of Europe.
- 1882 *Garden* 28 Oct. 377/1 The Purple Mullein..is an old garden favourite.
- 1924 L. H. BAILEY *Man. Cultivated Plants* 674 V. *phoeniceum*, L. Purple Mullein. To 5ft high..fls. in a simple slender nearly glabrous raceme, purple or red.
- 2002 *Sunday Times* (Nexis) 11 Aug. (Style section) 28 The small, lively and wiry purple mullein V. *phoeniceum* comes in shades of pink and mauve and looks good among Mediterranean sages and rosemary.

**purple nut grass** *n.* a widely naturalized sedge, *Cyperus rotundus*, whose roots form nutlike tubers and which is a serious weed in tropical regions; cf. NUT GRASS *n.*

- 1988 *New Scientist* 28 July 39/3 As the waters receded, they collected annual plants such as chamomile and tubers of purple nut-grass (*Cyperus rotundus*).
- 2000 A. M. T. MOORE et al. *Village on Euphrates* iii. 71 These [swamps] can reasonably be expected to support extensive stands of..the common reed..and, in shallower water and on mud flats, the sea club-rush, and the purple nut-grass, *Cyperus rotundus*.

**purple osier** *n.* = *purple willow n.*

- 1797 J. ABERCROMBIE *Universal Gardener & Botanist* (ed. 2) at *Osier* There are different sorts of Osiers, such as the yellow, green, purple, Dutch Osier, wire Osier, &c.
- 1893 J. NESBIT *Brit. Forest Trees* 327 The purple osier (*S. purpurea*), so called from the colour of its anthers during the time of flowering, produces very thin but exceedingly tough withes.
- 2003 *Irish Times* (Nexis) 8 Mar. (Weekend section) 58 Willows can shoot up by as much as three metres a year, and include the purple osier..to supply the slender, supple twigs for finer baskets.

**purple ragwort** *n.* an annual, purple-flowered South African ragwort, *Senecio elegans*, often cultivated for ornamental purposes; cf. JACOBÆA *n.*

1.

- [1745 P. MILLER *Gardeners Kalendar* (ed. 7) 74 Purple-flower'd Ragwort.]
- 1754 P. MILLER *Gardeners Kalendar* (ed. 10) 315 Plants in Flower in the open Air..if the season be mild..the purple Ragwort, Eupatoriums, Clinopodiums, and Helenia's.
- 1890 *Cent. Dict.* at *Ragwort* Purple Ragwort, the purple jacobæa, *Senecio elegans*, a handsome garden species from the Cape of Good Hope.
- 1976 *Hortus Third* (L. H. Bailey Hortorium) 1035/2 *Senecio elegans* L. (*Jacobaea elegans*... Purple Ragwort... S.Afr.; escaped in Calif.

**purple saxifrage** *n.* a low-growing purple-flowered saxifrage, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, found on rocky landscapes in north temperate regions.

- 1798 W. CURTIS *Flora Londinensis* II. facing Pl. 83 *Saxifraga Oppositifolia*. Purple Saxifrage... This species of Saxifrage, the only British one with purple flowers, is found plentifully on the summits of our highest mountains.



1888 F. A. LEES *Flora W. Yorks.* 246 *Saxifraga oppositifolia* L. Purple Saxifrage... Native; exposed alpine rocks, very rare, locally plentiful.

2000 P. PULLMAN *Amber Spyglass* (2001) iii. 43 And in confirmation, a little Arctic flower, a purple saxifrage, blossomed improbably where the witch had planted it as a signal in a cranny of the rock.

**purple sprouting broccoli** *n.* an early variety of broccoli with purplish flower heads, widely grown as a vegetable; cf. *sprouting broccoli* *n.* at SPROUTING *adj.* Compounds.

1917 *Times* 14 Apr. 9/5 The purple-sprouting broccoli would be grown in the ornamental garden did not its utility exceed its beauty.

2003 *Org. Gardening* Sept. 24/1 The Romans also grew purple sprouting broccoli—still loved by many gardeners.

**purple spurge** *n.* a small prostrate purplish spurge, *Euphorbia peplis*, found on sandy coastal areas in southern and western Europe (and formerly the British Isles).

[1719 tr. J. Pitton de Tournefort *Compl. Herbal* I. 37/2 Purple Sea-Spurge.]

?1785 EARL OF BUTE *Bot. Tables* II. 418 Purple Spurge. *E. peplis*. Stem of 4 inches, decumbent, reddish.

1920 J. VAUGHAN *Music of Wild Flowers* i. 12 When on a visit to the Isle of Wight [J. S.] Mill noticed on the shore of Sandown Bay a single specimen of the purple spurge.

1992 *Guardian* (Nexis) 28 Nov. 3 The saddest entry of all is for the purple spurge, once seen on the beaches of the west and south of England. It has become extinct, and is therefore removed from the protected list.

**purple-tassels** *n.* rare the tassel hyacinth, *Muscari comosum*; cf. *purse tassel* *n.* (b) at PURSE *n.* Compounds 2.

1629 J. PARKINSON *Paradisi in Sole* 118 Called..the purple faire haired Iacynth..and..of diuers Gentlewomen, purple tassels.

1902 T. W. SANDERS *Encycl. Gardening* (ed. 5) 316 *Purple-tassels* (*Muscari comosum*)—see *Muscari*.

† **purple velvet flower** *n.* *Obsolete rare* any of various kinds of cultivated amaranths; = *velvet-flower* *n.* at VELVET *n.* Compounds 4c.

1548 W. TURNER *Names of Herbes* sig. A.vij<sup>v</sup> The other kynde [of *Amaranthus*] is called here in Englande of some purple veluet floure, of other flouramore.

1658 E. PHILLIPS *New World Eng. Words* *Floramor*, a flower called the flower of love, passevelours, or purple velvet flower.

1719 F. A. DE ALVARADO *Spanish & Eng. Dialogues* 279 *Amaránto*. The Amaranth, or purple velvet Flower.

1800 T. ARNOLD *Engelske Grammatik i Kort Begreb* 30 *Fløjels-Blomst*, the Purple-Velvet Flower.

**purple willow** *n.* a shrubby European willow, *Salix purpurea*, which has purplish bark and was formerly much used in basket making.

- 1773 W. HANBURY *Compl. Body Planting & Gardening* I. 180/1 The real and distinct species of the Willow are:  
1. The White Willow. 2. The Yellow Willow. 3. Purple Willow [etc.].
- 1874 H. D. B. BAILEY *Local Tales* 217 Everything indicated an early spring. The bilberry was in full blossom..and the purple willow was shooting forth its tender branches.
- 1993 *Star-Ledger* (Newark, New Jersey) 21 Feb. II. 5/2 Plants that will manage in wet sandy soil include..privet, purple willow, pussy willow, hybrid poplar, [etc.].

**purplewood** *n.* any of several purplish tropical American woods, *esp.* purpleheart (cf. **PURPLE HEART** *n.* 1a).

- 1755 R. GOADE *Boerhaave's Materia Medica* 67 Campechianum lignum. Logwood. A purple Wood brought over in Logs... It is the Heart of a large Tree, native of the hotter Parts of America.
- 1776 W. J. MICKLE tr. L. de Camoens *Lusiad* x. 477 That mighty realm for purple wood renown'd, Shall stretch the Lusian empire's western bound.
- 1858 P. L. SIMMONDS *Dict. Trade Products* 307/1 *Purple-wood*, an undefined Brazilian wood, principally used for ramrods, and occasionally for buhl work, marquetry, and turning.
- 1923 *Burlington Mag.* June 292/1 The remaining *secrétaire* stamped by Riesener..goes further in simplicity of woodwork—panels of thuja, with borders of purple-wood (*amaranthe*).
- 1999 *Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair: 1999 Handbk.* 141/4 Boxwood stringing, set into the purplewood, enhances the line of the shaped apron and splay feet.

**purple wreath** *n.* queen's wreath, *Petrea volubilis*.

- 1864 A. H. R. GRISEBACH *Flora Brit. W. Indian Islands* 789/1 Wreath, purple: *Petrea volubilis*.
- 1964 T. M. GREENSILL *Gardening in Tropics* III. ii. 117 *Petrea volubilis* (*Verbenaceae*)—‘Purple Wreath’. A strong, woody perennial twining plant which can grow to 20 feet.
- 2003 *Innisfail* (Australia) *Advocate* (Nexis) 31 May (News section) 6 *Petrea*, the purple wreath, is often mistaken for wisteria, the bright blue flowers cover the vine from winter to spring.

(c)

**purple airway** *n. colloquial* a route reserved for an aircraft on which a monarch or a member of a royal family is flying.

- 1955 *Daily Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica) 1 Feb. 12/2 Air control experts met at London Airport last night and fixed a 5,000-mile long ‘Purple Airway’ for Princess Margaret's flight to Trinidad today.
- 1970 *Times* 1 Aug. 1/7 When the Royal Family fly long distances a special ‘purple airway’ is imposed.
- 2002 *Times* (Nexis) 18 July 9 The Queen has the additional safety of a ‘purple airway’.

**purple bacterium** *n.* [after German *Purpurbacterium* (T. W. Engelmann 1888, in *Bot. Zeitung* 46 663)] *Microbiology* any of various bacteria of the suborder Rhodospirillineae and allied groups, which contain a purple photoactive pigment.

- 1897 *Bot. Gaz.* 24 447 He [sc. Engelmann]..shows that the purple bacteria..have photosynthetic powers, although this property is not marked.

- 1912 W. H. LANG tr. *Strasburger's Text-bk. Bot.* (ed. 4) II. i. 337 The Purple Bacteria, which develop in water with decomposing organic matter in the absence of oxygen and the presence of light, contain..a green and a red pigment.
- 1994 *Nature* 14 July 104/1 Scotophobic behaviour is typical of motile purple bacteria, is independent of the direction of illumination, and does not occur if the light intensity is reduced only gradually.

**purple chamber** *n. historical* a room in the palace of the Byzantine Emperors in which members of the royal family were born, believed either to be decorated with purple cloth or to be inlaid with porphyry; the porphyry chamber (cf. **PORPHYROGENITE** *n.* and sense B. 1d); also in extended use.

- 1683 R. DIXON *Canidia* III. iv. 20 Porphyrogenitus, sweet as Amber. Was begot in the Purple Chamber.
- 1831 W. SCOTT *Count Robert* iii, in *Tales of my Landlord* 4th Ser. I. 87 An imperial Princess, porphyrogenita, or born in the sacred purple chamber itself.
- 1874 S. DOBELL *Poet. Wks.* (1875) ii. 27 These pamper'd ears, born in the purple chamber Of silken state.
- 2000 *Past & Present* 169 27 The famous epithet [sc. 'born in the purple'] derives from the purple chamber in which empresses were delivered of their children from the mid-eight century onwards.

† **purple-coat** *n. Obsolete* a soldier whose uniform is characterized by a purple coat; cf. **REDCOAT** *n.* 1a.

- 1644 J. VICARS *Jehovah-jireh* 200 The Lord Brooke his Purple-coats..did most singular good service all this fight.

† **purple copper** *n. Mineralogy Obsolete* = *purple copper ore n.*

- 1830 *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) 120 402 The relative power of conducting galvanic electricity possessed by many of the metalliferous minerals... Conductors. Copper nickel, Purple Copper, [etc.].
- 1864 H. WATTS *Dict. Chem.* II. 78 Purple copper does not give off sulphur when ignited in a test-tube.
- 1881 *Trans. Amer. Inst. Mining Engineers 1880-1* 9 122 *Copper-ores*,..purple copper (variegated or peacock ore, bornite, sulphide of copper and iron).

**purple copper ore** *n. Mineralogy* (now rare) a purple ore of copper; spec. bornite.

- 1728 J. WOODWARD *Attempt Nat. Hist. Fossils Eng.* (1729) 198 A glossy Purple Copper-Ore. Comarten, Devonshire.
- 1865 *Times* 27 Mar. 4/5 These [lodes] contain purple copper ore and gray copper ore, both extremely rich in silver.
- 1910 *Encycl. Brit.* IX. 757/1 The colour on a freshly fractured surface is bronzy or coppery, but in moist air this rapidly tarnishes with iridescent blue and red colours; hence the names purple copper ore, variegated copper ore., horse-flesh ore, and erubescite.

**purple death** *n. slang* a cheap red wine.

1947 D. M. DAVIN *Gorse blooms Pale* 199 Everyone goes for the purple death.

2006 *Daily News* (New Plymouth, N.Z.) (Nexis) 18 Feb. 17 The subsequent ashes [were] filtered into a bottle of Purple Death (a dodgy Hawke's Bay red from the early 1980s).

**purple-dyeing** *adj.* and *n.* †(*a*) *adj.* (of a substance) that acts as a purple dye (*obsolete*); (*b*) *n.* the process or practice of dyeing cloth purple.

1607 T. WALKINGTON *Optick Glasse* v. f. 33<sup>v</sup> Murex, the purple fish, who yeldes her purple-dying humor, being but once strucke.

1753 *Chambers's Cycl.* Suppl. at *Trumpet-shell* The purple-dying liquor of the *buccinum*.

1858 *National Mag.* Feb. 130/1 Long subsequent to the discovery of the art of purple-dying, any person might wear robes of that color.

1877 *Globe Encycl.* II. 298/1 *Cudbear*, a purple dyeing substance prepared from various lichens.

2004 L. J. HALL *Rom. Berytus* x. 231 It is possible to trace the gradual restriction of purple dyeing to government-controlled facilities with occasional attempts by the dyers to sell privately.

† **purple-fly** *n.* *Obsolete* (*a*) *Angling* a kind of artificial fly; (*b*) a kind of flying insect (not identified) (*rare*).

1696 J. SMITH *Compleat Fisher* 131 The Purple-fly, with Purple Wool, mixed with light brown Bears-Hair, the Wings of Stares Feather, Dub it with Purple Silk.

1753 *Chambers's Cycl.* Suppl. *Mida*,...the name of a worm or maggot, of which is produced the purple fly, found on bean-flowers.

1799 tr. *Laboratory* (ed. 6) II. x. 311 Purple-fly. Dubbing, of purple wool, and a little bear's hair mixed.

**purple haze** *n.* *slang* (now dated) lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), used as a recreational drug; cf. sense B. 9(b).

1967 J. HENDRIX *Purple Haze* (*sheet music*) 2 Purple haze was in my brain, Lately things don't seem the same.

1970 *Times* 24 Mar. 2/3 The American LSD..has been coming in..under such exotic names as..‘purple haze’, and ‘blue cheer’.

1996 *Guardian* 12 Oct. (Jobs & Money section) 6/4 Tripped-out space cadets will fork out in excess of £960 on purple haze.

**purple lake** *n.* a lake (pigment) of a purple colour, formerly made from the cochineal insect, *Dactylopius coccus*.

1785 *Independent Jrnl.* (N.Y.) 9 Nov. (*advt.*) R. Green... Prepares and sells, whole sale and Retail, the following Articles... Fine Prussian Blue, Fine Purple Lake, [etc.].

1821 *London Mag.* Sept. 290/2 The purple-lake-coloured stuffs.

1934 H. HILER *Notes Technique Painting* ii. 123 Crimson lake, Purple lake, etc., now usually made from alizarin... Also prepared from cochineal... Should be regarded as obsolete.

1996 *Stud. Conservation* 41 86/1 During the late nineteenth century cochineal was used in the production of carmine, crimson, and three purple lakes.

**Purpleman** *n.* a person who has reached the second rank or degree in the Orange Order; cf. **ORANGEMAN** *n.*<sup>1</sup>

- 1823 *Times* 9 May 2/5 Witness certainly did not conceive that his oath, as an Orangeman, bound him to conceal any truth from the house. Knows so little of party matter, that he cannot well say whether he is a 'purple-man' or not.
- 1836 *Fraser's Mag.* **13** 393 The very names of 'Orangeman' and 'Purpleman' are beneath the real elevation of their high and noble cause.
- 1972 T. GRAY *Orange Order* 215 In Northern Ireland [the Arch Purple] merely represents a transitional stage through which a Purpleman must go before he becomes one of the Black Preceptories.
- 2002 K. HADDICK-FLYNN *Short Hist. Orangeism* 61 Most Orangemen are 'Purplemen' and its degree is regarded as the culmination of the natural progression through the Orange Order.

**purple meeting** *n.* (in the Orange Order) a meeting of Purplemen.

- 1906 *Daily News* 10 Feb. 8/2 Injuries inflicted on the roadside..after a 'purple' meeting in the Bush Side Orange Hall.

**purple membrane** *n.* a membrane containing photoactive pigments which is produced under certain conditions in the archaebacterium *Halobacterium salinarium*.

- 1968 STOECKENIUS & KUNAU in *Jrnl. Cell Biol.* **38** 344/1 The purple band, henceforth called purple membranes, contains considerably less RNA and slightly less lipid than the orange-red fraction.
- 1997 *Jrnl. Molecular Biol.* **267** 172 The *Halobacterium salinarium* purple membrane is a two-dimensional crystalline lattice containing bacteriorhodopsin (BR) and lipid.

**purple passage** *n.* [after classical Latin *purpureus pannus* (see **PURPLE PATCH** *n.*)] an elaborate or excessively ornate passage in a literary composition.

- 1882 *Macmillan's Mag.* Jan. 211/2 The book is..marked by great reserve and quietness of tone... There is not a 'purple passage' in all the two volumes.
- 1895 E. GOSSE in *Cent. Mag.* July 451/2 Emphasizing the purpler passages with lifted voice and gesticulating finger.
- 1937 *Discovery* Oct. 326/2 Mrs. Johnson says little about herself, indulges in no purple passages, and without the conscious effort of the raconteur she manages to introduce many good stories.
- 2001 S. T. ASMA *Stuffed Animals & Pickled Heads* v. 197 One of her purple passages reads: 'The doctrine of Mr. Darwin is the rational revelation of progress, pitting itself in its logical antagonism with the irrational revelation of the fall'.

† **purple powder of Cassius** *n.* *Obsolete* = *purple of Cassius* *n.* at sense B. 4.

- 1782 Purple powder of Cassius [see sense B. 4].

- 1823 A. URE *Dict. Chem.* (ed. 2) 492/2 A plate of tin, immersed in a solution of gold, affords a purple powder, called the purple powder of Cassius.
- 1848 *Lancet* 20 May 548/1 The oxide, or rather deutoxide, of gold,—the purple powder of Cassius, is the next form.

**purple prose** *n.* overly ornate or fussy prose; cf. *purple passage n.*

- 1901 *North Adams (Mass.) Evening Transcript* 27 Feb. It is probably in the wine and egg period that he composes accounts of Nero banquets and other purple prose matter.
- 1952 N. STRAUS *Two Thirds of Nation* iv. 77 He sees advertisements describing new houses for sale... Glowing adjectives and purple prose embellish the descriptions.
- 2004 *Times Lit. Suppl.* 10 Dec. 29/1 A good editor would have..written rude comments in the margins near the frequent passages of purple prose.

**purple quartz** *n.* *Mineralogy* (a) = AMETHYST *n.* 1a; †(b) *U.S. regional*  
= FLUORSPAR *n.* (*obsolete*).

- 1819 W. T. BRANDE *Man. Chem.* v. 327 Purple quartz or amethyst is tinged with a little iron and manganese.
- 1896 *Cosmopolitan* Feb. 449 The fluor-spar is locally known as 'purple quartz'.
- 1943 *Science* 11 June 531 Milky quartz, rose quartz and purple quartz (amethyst) are useless [for the manufacture of quartz oscillator plates].
- 1994 *Gleaner (Kingston, Jamaica)* 3 Aug. 14/1 Amethyst—a purple quartz is calming. It also sharpens the concious mind.

† **purple rash** *n.* *Medicine Obsolete rare* = PURPURA *n.* 2 (cf. sense B. 3).

- a1812 R. WILLAN *Classif. Cutaneous Dis.* in J. Thomson tr. W. Cullen *Synopsis Nosol.* (1816) App. 143 *Purpura*; Purple, or Scorbutic Rash.

**purple sin** *n.* a grave or heinous sin.

- 1601 R. YARINGTON *Two Lamentable Trag.* sig. K2 The blood of Iesus Christ hath power, To make my purple sinne as white as Snowe.
- 1658 J. SPENCER *Kaiva kai Παλαια* 507 In thy Youth thou art not Cloath but Wooll; so that the deepest Purple sins are those which are died in the Wooll.
- 1850 R. BELL *Ladder of Gold* III. vi. i. 156 Let ruin come, I have plucked out the purple sin, and shown its hollowness to the world.
- 1905 H. A. VACHELL *Hill* vii. 147 I never said bridge was a purple sin.
- 1987 A. POWELL in *Sunday Times* (1997) (Nexis) 21 Sept. Striking how much Wilde himself accepted Victorian view of homosexuality as a 'purple sin', rather than physiological mutation.

**purple zone** *n.* = *purple airway n.*

- 1970 *Daily Tel.* 1 Aug. 1/2 'A purple zone' was not in operation..because the Prince was flying only in the immediate area of Tangmere.



2004 *Daily Record* (Glasgow) (Nexis) 12 Nov. 4 All royal flights plot an exact route and other aircraft are warned to stay clear of the area, known as a 'purple zone'.

## C2. Compounds of the noun.

### a.

#### (a) Objective.

#### purple-dyer *n.*

- 1738 E. A. BURGIS *Ann. Church* IV. 340 Lydia the purple-dyer.  
 1848 *Amer. Whig Rev.* Sept. 243/2 Laodicea was proud of her inimitable horsemen; Lydia of her purple-dyers.  
 1904 W. M. RAMSAY *Lett. to Seven Churches* xxix. 421 The Jews..were organised in trade-guilds, the purple-dyers, the carpet makers, and perhaps others.  
 2000 *Jrnl. Biblical Lit.* 119 317 An association of purple dyers is found at Thessalonica.

#### purple-producing *adj.*

- 1898 J. HASTINGS *Dict. Bible* I. 457 For other purple-producing shellfish see Purple.  
 1937 H. POPE *St. Augustine of Hippo* i. 18 In the purple-producing island of Girba..Libyan was spoken, as Berber indeed is to this day.  
 2003 *San Francisco Chron.* (Nexis) 9 Feb. (Sunday Review section) 2 We find ourselves in Lebanon in search of the purple-producing shellfish valued by ancient Phoenician traders.

### (b) Instrumental.

#### purple-clad *adj.*

- 1639 G. DANIEL *Ecclus.* xxxiii. 45 Heare me, O you purple-Clad Magistrates, You civill Rulers.  
 1823 M. W. SHELLEY *Valpurga* II. vii. 161 The purple-clad emperors of Constantinople may envy your state and power.  
 1904 *St. Nicholas* May 612/2 Where Izumo's walls appear purple-clad, the gods assembled in the tenth month of every year.  
 1999 *Transition* 80 4/1 I raced wide-eyed through my purple-clad hero's latest adventures.

#### purple-dusted *adj.*

- 1870 W. MORRIS *Earthly Paradise: Pt. IV* 383 The purple-dusted butterfly.  
 1952 *Fresno* (Calif.) *Bee* 24 Aug. B2/6 The purple dusted fruit carpets the ground.  
 2004 *Sunday Tel.* (Nexis) 19 Dec. (Review) 20 In some she placed succulent plants such as the purple-dusted Echeveria 'Perle von Nurnberg'.

#### purple-dyed *adj.*

- 1579 T. NORTH tr. Plutarch *Liues* 393 If it be a commendable thing..not to care for purple dyed gownes, nor for houses with plastered walles: it followeth then [etc.].  
 1876 D. ROCK *Textile Fabrics* (new ed.) v. 39 The costly purple-dyed silks called 'blatta'.  
 1943 *Amer. Jrnl. Archaeol.* 47 266 They are all purple-dyed woollen stuffs, embroidered with wool of various colors.

1993 *Atlantic* Aug. 55/2 She spoke about the ancient 'purple trade'—the trade in expensive purple-dyed fabric.

### purple-edged *adj.*

- 1702 S. GILBERT *Florists Vade-mecum* (ed. 3) 35 The rest have green thick leaves and broad,..some smooth and plain on the edges, others downy and jagged, or purple edged [1682 purled edges; 1693 purled edged].
- 1875 E. POSTE tr. Gaius *Institutionum Iuris Civilis* (ed. 2) I. Comm. 90 The purple-edged praetexta was generally laid aside by boys along with the bulla aurea..on the first Liberalia,..after the completion of their fourteenth year.
- 1914 E. S. BOUCHER *Spain under Rom. Empire* II. v. 69 Purple-edged tunics of linen were sometimes worn on a campaign by Iberian soldiers.
- 2006 *N.Y. Times* (Nexis) 14 Apr. F7 They must be stripped of that protective sac..down to the milky white, purple-edged bulb.

### purple-lined *adj.*

- 1749 *Mill Cushion's Second Addr.* 11 From the purple-lined Closet, to the Clobber's Bulk,..ye will hear all declare, the most foolish action is the most fashionable.
- 1820 J. KEATS *Lamia* II, in *Lamia & Other Poems* 29 The purple-lined palace of sweet sin.
- 1938 E. BOWEN *Death of Heart* II. iii. 215 Portia bought a compendium—lightly ruled violet paper, purple lined envelopes.
- 2003 *Vanity Fair* (N.Y.) May 217/3 People wore purple-lined Ozwald Boateng suits.

### purple-stained *adj.*

- 1597 R. JOHNSON *2nd Pt. Famous Hist. Seauen Champions* sig. Iv She will procure to take a strange reuenge vpon his purple-stayned soule.
- 1820 J. KEATS *Ode to Nightingale* in *Lamia & Other Poems* 108 With..purple-stained mouth.
- 1969 R. L. S. BRUCE-MITFORD *Art of Codex Amiatinus* 3 The third leaf, a purple-stained folio with text written in yellow orpiment (not gold), carried on its recto and verso respectively a prologue and a table of contents.
- 2006 *N.Y. Times* (Nexis) 24 Mar. A18 Freedom is as much about the culture and customs of a society as it is about the spectacle of heavily guarded elections and purple-stained fingers.

### purple-tinged *adj.*

- 1726 E. FENTON in A. Pope et al. tr. Homer *Odyssey* IV. XIX. 275 A mantle purple-ting'd [Gk. δῖπλακα δῶκα καλῇ ᾗ πορφύρεῃ], and radiant vest.
- 1824 D. M. MOIR *Legend Genevieve* 232 These lichen'd stones, all purple-tinged and blue..Untouch'd have lain, and undisturb'd and lone!
- 1952 A. G. L. HELLYER *Sanders' Encycl. Gardening* (ed. 22) 393 *P[opulus]..tremula*, 'Aspen',..with vars. *pendula*, 'Weeping Aspen', and *purpurea*, purple-tinged foliage.
- 1996 R. MABEY *Flora Britannica* 293/2 It is a tall and handsome species with purple-tinged, 'claret-dipped' flower-heads.

### b.

**purple-born** *n.* and *adj.* (*a*) *adj.* Of, relating to, or designating a person who is 'born to the purple' (see sense B. 1d); (*b*) *n.* (with *the*) such a person (*rare*).

- 1820 J. H. WIFFEN *Julia Alpinula* 164 I heard all day the shrilling horn proclaim The captive's freedom, and the monarch's shame, And smiled to think, that I..Could with such dread the purple-born assault!
- 1865 A. TROLLOPE *Can you forgive Her?* II. xl. 317 Lady Glencora and Alice were sitting up-stairs with the small, purple-born one in their presence.
- 1952 N. MITCHISON *Trav. Light* II. i. 60 In the innermost hall was the Purple-born, and on orders of the Purple-born was all done.
- 1999 N. GARLAND *Byzantine Empresses* viii. 142 Psellos here intends us to believe that Basil had Zoe trained for her position as purple-born princess and possible heir of the empire.

**purple father** *n.* a cardinal; cf. sense B. 1c.

- 1615 R. BRATHWAIT *Strappado* 47 A purple sin..Since purple-fathers oft-times go vnto it.
- a1711 T. KEN *Edmund IV*, in *Wks.* (1721) II. 105 Even Purple Fathers of my Favours boast, They who should best know Heav'n, esteem me most.
- 1928 *Times* 31 Dec. 13/6 Henry [VIII] added a tennis court to the Palace which the Purple Father [sc. Cardinal Wolsey] had given him.

**purple gland** *n.* *Zoology* the hypobranchial gland of some gastropod molluscs, esp. those that yield Tyrian purple.

- 1883 *Encycl. Brit.* XVI. 648/2 The presence of glandular plication of the surface of the mantle-flap..and an adrectal gland (purple-gland).
- 1958 J. E. MORTON *Molluscs* ii. 47 Indigoid pigments occur as in the purple gland in Muricacea, often too in their egg cases.
- 2001 *Systematic Biol.* 50 785/1 Two glands in sea hares produce an external secretion, the opaline gland..and the ink or purple gland.

**purple-seller** *n.* *historical* a person selling Tyrian purple, esp. St Lydia of Thyatira (see Acts 16:14–15).

- 1547 J. BALE *Lattre Examinacyon A. Askewe* f. 44 Lydia by name, a purple seller verye rytche in merchaundyse, receyued Paule, Syllas, and Timothe.
- 1629 L. ANDREWES *XCVI. Sermon*. v. 315 The Purple seller (and if the purple seller, why not the Purple wearer?)..were in earth, Saints (as we reade) and are (we doubt not) in Abraham's bosome.
- 1702 L. ECHARD *Gen. Eccl. Hist.* II. v. 193 To these Paul deliver'd the Word of God, and by the Influence of God's Spirit converted, among others, a certain Woman nam'd Lydia, a Purple Seller.
- 1859 P. SCHAFF *Hist. Apostolic Church* I. iii. 263 One of these, Lydia, a purple-seller of Thyatira..was baptized with all her family.
- 1985 *Vigiliae Christianae* 39 194 As to Lydia the purple-seller..M.'s conclusion that she belonged to the 'Greek-speaking merchants who have settled in Philippi' and possessed 'some wealth' is too optimistic.

**purple-wearer** *n.* a person who habitually wears purple, *esp.* (formerly) a rich or noble person (cf. sense B. 1b).

- 1629 L. ANDREWES *XCVI. Serm.* v. 315 The Purple seller (and if the purple seller, why not the Purple wearer?)..were in earth, Saints (as we reade) and are (we doubt not) in Abraham's bosome.
- 1860 G. W. THORNBURY *Turkish Life & Char.* I. v. 97 Aqueducts built by some forgotten purple-wearer.
- a1906 P. L. DUNBAR *Coll. Poetry* (1993) 32 Love is the King, the Purple-Wearer.
- 2002 *Sunday Times* (Nexis) 29 Sept. (Style section) 9 These days, rather than posh people with an eye for colour, purple-wearers are likely to be gold-digging, money-grabbing, castle-creeping adventurers with reasons way beyond their etre.

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