



# **JOURNAL**

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Membership is open to all interested individuals. Membership in the Holly Society of America is a great way to meet other gardening and horticultural enthusiasts. The purpose of the Holly Society of America, Inc., is to stimulate interest, promote research, and collect and disseminate information about the genus *Ilex*. You will enjoy 2 journals each year and access to the Members Only web pages. Commercial/Institutional Memberships have additional benefits. See the website for details.



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The Holly Society of America, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.



# Holly Society of America

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### On The Cover

Inkberries: In Search of Our Native Son

Female *Ilex glabra* in bloom

See more on page 12

Photo by Jim Resch

If you are interested in joining a committee, you'll be in good hands. We have a dedicated team of committee members who have extensive knowledge and passion for *Ilex*. They are helpful and willing to assist new volunteers. Your unique skills and interests have a place in the Holly Society of America. Depending on your interests, once you have decided to offer your time and expertise, contact Sue Hunter or a Committee Chair. See Website for list.

## HOLLY SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

The Holly Society of America, Inc., founded in 1947, is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization of individuals interested in learning about the genus *Ilex*. Through Society publications, lectures, meetings, and visits to holly collections, information is provided for skilled growers as well as novices. Local or regional groups of holly enthusiasts are encouraged to establish chapters under the National Society.

The Holly Society funds research and serves as the International Registration Authority for cultivated *Ilex*, having been so appointed in 1958 by the International Commission for Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants of the International Union of Biological Sciences.

Membership Levels Benefits are available at [hollysocam.org/membership.htm](http://hollysocam.org/membership.htm).

Inquiries about items published in the *Journal* and the *Holly Letter*, and contributions of articles for publication should be sent to the editor, Rachel Cobb, at [editor@hollysocam.org](mailto:editor@hollysocam.org)

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# Holly Society Journal

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## From the President

### Greetings from the Executive Board of the Holly Society of America

Such a year we have all experienced. Early on during the pandemic, many parts of the country were experiencing one of the most floriferous, dazzling display of springtime species we have had in years. Like a technicolor dream, the colors and hues took on a seemingly magical quality, all in the midst of our topsy-turvy world. It has been a year of revelations, surprises, disappointments, and new beginnings for every individual, business, and organization. The plant world is no exception.

The Nursery Industry is tenacious, adaptable, and creative. It is a line of work that teaches resilience and patience because for years we have learned to work with the elements and the Natural World. And every year is different. As a woody propagator, I respect and look forward to all that plants teach me, knowing that such knowledge is revealed to us gradually, sometimes only after very long periods of observation and study.

The true seasons of the Solstices are changing drastically in a short amount of time and much faster than decades and centuries ago. Call it “Climate Change” if you will; I personally prefer the term Environmental Impact because the climate has been changing for millions of years. For those who aren’t familiar with the term “Climate Change” the phrase can seem dismissive and off-putting. Everyone has an impact on the planet and can take positive action toward the health of our natural surroundings. Trying to ask people to do something about or change the climate can sound rather ominous and unattainable. As a result of Human-based Environmental Impact (destruction of natural lands and waterways, toxic chemical pollution and sprays, consumption of certain foods, disadvantaged, overcrowded impoverished areas; I could go on and on...) it has become more important than ever to make ecologically beneficial choices.

Where am I going with this? This spring I witnessed the germination of seeds that according to all of the “books” require a two year stratification period before breaking dormancy. **The seeds germinated in a matter of weeks after collecting from their open-pollinated parent plants outside.** If it had only occurred with one species, I may have attributed it to a factor relevant only to that species. But to have three species exhibit the same performance during the same year within the same time period is virtually unheard of in even the most knowledgeable research propagation circles. Here’s to *Hamamelis virginiana* (N)\*, *Viburnum opulus* var. *americanum*; syn. *Viburnum trilobum* (N), and *Ilex verticillata* ‘Mary Jo’ (NS)\*\*for germinating “outside the books”! Plants don’t read what we write about them anyway! Nature is speaking to us and we need to listen.

As I sift through horticultural articles and extension agency pages online and follow many native pollinator and environmental groups on social media, I believe the pendulum has swung too far when it comes to which Native plants are “appropriate and beneficial” to plant. Those with valuable educational platforms who have the respect of the general horticultural public need to care enough to take

# From the President

Sue Hunter



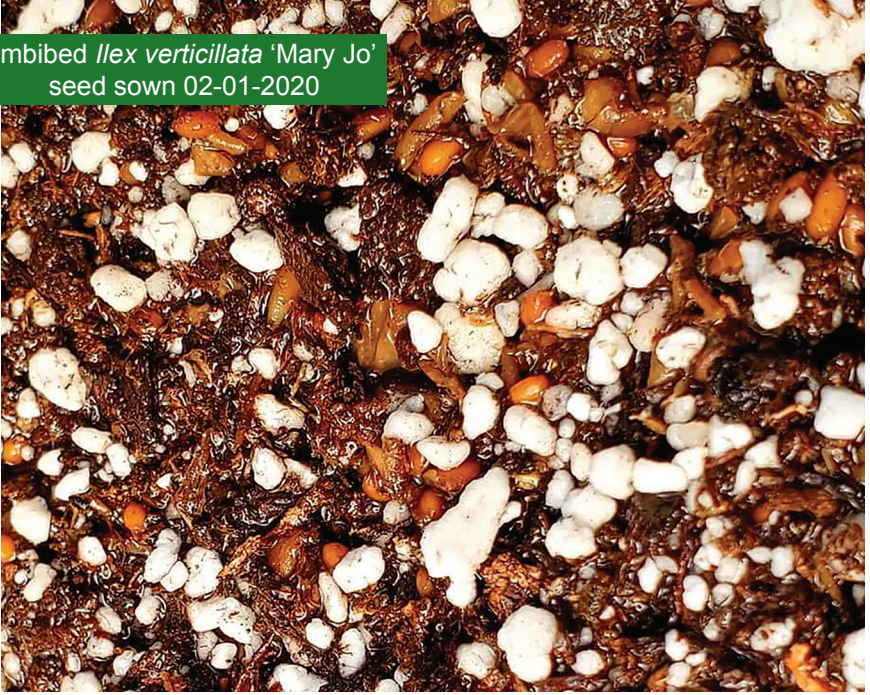
Soaking *Ilex verticillata* 'Mary Jo' seed collected January 15, 2020.



# From the President

Sue Hunter

Imbibed *Ilex verticillata* 'Mary Jo'  
seed sown 02-01-2020



Sue Hunter

*Ilex verticillata*  
'Mary Jo' seedlings 2-1-2020



*Ilex verticillata* 'Mary Jo'  
seed germinated 04-07-2020.

the time to impartially educate people about terms like “cultivar”, “hybrid”, “named variety”, and “selection” (which is most important but rarely mentioned). Presently, there is a growing school of thought that if a plant has a “fancy cute name” then that means it is “unworthy” of planting because it’s not “pure native”. I can only assume that the person who wrote this was referring to the term “straight species”.

For decades, many named native trees and shrubs originated as naturally occurring chance seedlings in the wild and cuttings were taken for some outstanding physical characteristic such as growth habit, flower color, vigor, leaf size and shape, or fruit size and shape. These plants are selected for vegetative propagation or cloning because of their outstanding characteristics. They are known as naturally occurring selections. The production and genetics of mature naturally occurring selections’ seed/fruit are not less beneficial to the environment, wildlife or pollinators. Their seed will always revert back to the straight species or the “pure native”. I have no qualms (and neither should anyone else) about planting out *Ilex verticillata* ‘Mary Jo’ or *Ilex opaca* ‘Satyr Hill’ knowing that their hardy, wild progeny are pollinator friendly and helping to restore areas plagued with invasives. Genetic diversity is not lost by planting out such clones. Rather, genetic diversity can be reestablished by planting out certain cloned selections. There are perhaps hundreds more named selections in many woody and herbaceous Genera that have originated from “wild” parents. The same holds true. There is a great need for public education about knowing the origin of named selections.

I am not alone in my profession in feeling pigeon-holed by people who seek to know little about the decades-in-making Native movement within the Horticultural Industry. Propagators such as myself and my colleagues are tired of being thrown under the bus by those who have our respect because of their expertise, in their own areas of expertise, but are not Horticulturists, Propagators or Nursery Professionals. Making uninformed comments about botanical terminology serves only to mislead and confuse the public.

I don’t feel guilty because I have non-native grass pathways of lawn between my pollinator meadow and Winterberry rows. I can sleep at night even though I don’t have Solidago sp. (Goldenrod) planted on every square inch of my Environmental Preserve. It doesn’t mean that I don’t believe in the value of natives and the preservation of our precious naturally occurring ecosystems, I believe in environmentally friendly choices that realistically fulfill a purpose for everyone and their gardening or landscape situation.



Your President – *Sue Hunter*

\*Native

\*\*Native Selection



# The Beautiful Burford's Holly

By Peter Loewer

Peter Loewer



Usually, my plants of record come from the Carolinas, but right now a specimen of Burford's holly sits in my garden, most of its fourteen-foot branches still weighted down by thousands of bright red holly berries that would make a Dicken's miser sit up and take notice, especially during the season between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Then we have a fine crop of new green berries, so I suspect next fall and winter will again feature a great show.

Our garden is terraced and the structural wall is about 16 feet high, the bottom being formed by a three-foot high wall just right for sitting, then rising up to form the house terrace at the top. Years ago, when I spent weeks removing pernicious English ivy that covered the wall, I dug up and improved the bed formed by that three-foot wall, and added compost and some sharp sand for drainage, the resulting bed being three-feet wide, before it met the wall going up to the terrace. The Burford must love that soil, because its growth has been marvelous.

Instead of the Carolinas, my chosen plant originally came from a cutting first produced back in the mid-1990s in Atlanta's Westview Cemetery where, according to a great article by Janet Allcorn Williams (appearing in the December 12th, 1954, issue of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), this holly first appeared when discovered back in the 1890s by the cemetery gardener, one Thomas W. Burford,



an English nurseryman who moved to the South back in the 1880s.

Mister G. S. Lilly, who worked with Mr. Burford, said: “The millions of plants of Burford’s holly around our homes and buildings are all children or grandchildren of the original bush which is just inside the gates of Westview Cemetery.”

At that time the parent plant, now a tree, was about 40 feet by 40 feet, growing just inside the gates of the cemetery where it was trimmed back for a number of years so that thousands of cuttings first made their way to city gardens, then the suburbs, and finally far and wide, including Tennessee and Virginia.

“Mr. Burford,” said Mr. Lilly, “was an eccentric Englishman who did not have a relative in this country. I suppose I knew him as well as anyone living today, but he always managed to evade questions about himself or the holly that was named for in his honor. He was unmarried and devoted no time to making friends and little time to his new holly, for that matter. He propagated plants and set them out in the cemetery, then watched them only to see that they were not picked or sold. Our greenhouse did not sell any until after he left Westview. In all, there are less than 400 of his plants in the cemetery and he worked here for more than 30 years.”

Mr. Lilly went on to describe the Head Gardener as an unconventional man, who would get a haircut once in three years, was well-read, claimed to have been to college, bore a long mustache and a beard, and was a being of medium build.

He trained as a botanist and loved his flowers, which he cared for most tenderly, also admitting that his father was a gardener for Queen Victoria.

When Mr. Burford was quite old, he moved to Dallas, Georgia, where he boarded with a couple who cared for him, and the accommodations must have been exceedingly fine because he lived to be 90.

With its glossy, evergreen leaves and prodigious crop of red berries in winter, Burford holly (*Ilex cornuta* ‘Burfordii’) is a great choice for a large accent shrub, an evergreen privacy screens, or training as a small tree, and is always attractive with its naturally occurring pyramidal shape. This holly survives winter cold when grown in U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 7 through 9 and can eventually reach an ultimate height of 15 to 25 feet, though more commonly it stays between 8 and 12 feet. Burford is from the Chinese family of hollies, which unlike other varieties, are known for their ability to thrive after even the most severe pruning.

Except for removing dead, broken, or sometimes crossing branches (always at their base), pruning is generally not an expected action for most hollies. But Burford hollies make such a great hedge, they are often sheared several times a year. If your hedge hollies get too tall, or die back in the interior, or lose leaves at the bottom—usually the result of incorrect pruning—bring out your cutters and prune away. Burford hollies, either as hedges or left to grow as small trees, will occasionally need pruning just to give your landscape a new look. Severe pruning, often called rejuvenation pruning, also gives them a brand new look in the garden, but it might take a few years to recover if the pruning is too severe.

## Official Holly Arboreta Listings @ [hollysocam.org/arboreta.htm](http://hollysocam.org/arboreta.htm)

Organizations recognized by the Holly Society of America as Official Holly Arboreta or Experimental Test Centers that educates plant lovers in the use of holly in the landscape and that complies with set HSA guidelines are subject to submitting reports each year. You can view these annual reports submitted, on the Holly Society web site, [hollysocam.org/arboreta.htm](http://hollysocam.org/arboreta.htm).

Guidelines for Official Holly Arboreta and Test Centers are also online.

**Consider visiting these gardens  
on your travels.**





## Mary's Travel Stories

By Mary E. Harrison



After many years of belonging to the Holly Society of America, I would read the *Holly Journal*, but never attended the meetings. In the early 1990's we received an invitation from the Great Rivers chapter to attend their fall meeting at Dawes Arboretum. Having visited Dawes many times, we decided to attend. On arriving at the meeting in Zanesville, we reunited with Tom Simpson and his wife Ann, of Simpson Nursery in Vincennes, Indiana, where we'd been purchasing our *Ilex* varieties.

It was from Tom that I purchased our first *Ilex opaca* 'Miss Helen' for a customer. I am ashamed to admit I never planted one for my own garden. After the meeting Dawes gave all the members a free holly plant, I was also delighted with my purchases from the plant auction. During the final banquet, Albert Hendley announced if anyone was not in a rush to get home on Sunday morning, please visit his and Susan's home for a catered breakfast and garden tour. Being new to the group we thought we should not attend, but the Simpson's encouraged us to go with them. That is how we met the delightful Hendleys and began our friendship. After breakfast Bert took us to the beautiful garden around and below their home that was to later become "Mission Oaks". What they have accomplished over the years is a magnificent garden to share with the public. For those members who do not attend meetings, come and join us. Every meeting I've attended has been a delight and in the group you will not feel you're a stranger, but a fellow gardener. At one of the auctions, I bought an *Ilex* x 'Dr. Kassab', a *cornuta* x *perrenyi*, and was told to plant it in a sheltered area as it might not be hardy in my zone, but would get 6 foot tall. It now has nearly reached the house roof and is encroaching on a sidewalk. I have started many cuttings from it and planted them in open garden spaces, as it is perfectly hardy. Seedling hollies volunteer all over my six acres. I give credit to a large male *Ilex opaca* 'Nelson West'. When it blooms it emits a wonderful fragrance which I have never associated with other hollies. This is a tree from which I gave a blooming cutting to a customer who needed a male to pollinate his female *Ilex opaca*, since he had no room for another *Ilex*. He hung it in an olive bottle from his trees and was shocked to get some berries. He informed me he wouldn't need my little cutting anymore. He'd found a male on the campus of Miami University where he taught and he could take cuttings from that tree!



Albert Hendley and  
Mary E. Harrison



## SPONSOR YOUR FAVORITE HOLLY

By Sue Hunter

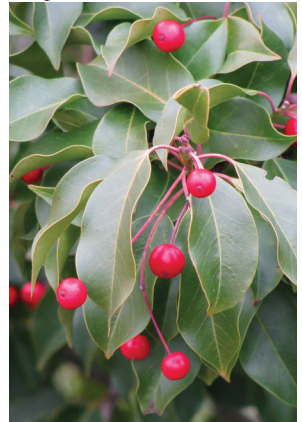
Do you have a holly that you admire more than others? Perhaps there's a stately specimen of a "named" variety that you or someone you know has long appreciated, or a relatively new plant that you're observing as it grows.

Consider sponsoring your choice and having your specimen recognized by the Holly Society of America. This is different than a holly registration.

Contact Sue Hunter for information: 717-779-6516.

See inside front cover >

*Ilex pedunculosa*



Sue Hunter

# Inkberries: In Search of Our Native Son

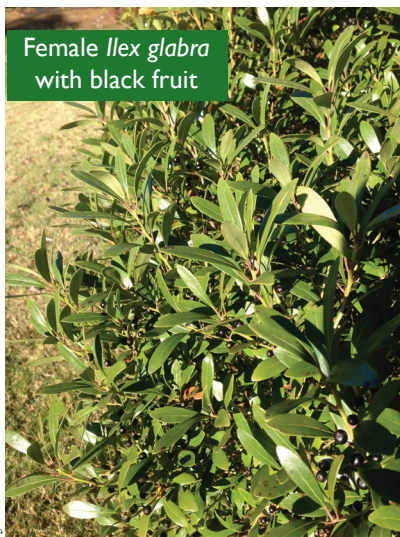
By Jim Resch

In the plant world, popularity can be an elusive and fickle thing. Consider the Inkberry, *Ilex glabra*, well-known in North America for centuries, but only recently gaining widespread consumer acceptance in the horticultural trade. For years, this native plant was described as “lurking in the shadows” by such luminaries as Michael Dirr,<sup>1</sup> as growers and homeowners mostly disregarded the species as plain and unexciting. A few named cultivars were introduced, but their use was largely limited to anonymous “green meatballs” in the residential landscape. Perhaps it was our very familiarity with the species that was working against it. As Robert Clark wrote for the *Holly Letter* almost fifty years ago, “If inkberry had come from Japan, people would rave about it.”<sup>2</sup>

And yet the inkberry has so much to recommend it. It is perhaps the hardiest broadleaf evergreen shrub in North America, with a range extending all the way to Nova Scotia and south to Florida. It tolerates wet soils that would kill most other evergreens, and can be planted anywhere from full sun to nearly full shade. In the wild, it tends to have a somewhat irregular growth habit, but named cultivars are generally more compact and can even be sheared if a more formal appearance is desired. Pest- and trouble-free, inkberries can be an ideal plant for new homeowners and beginning gardeners. Beekeepers will tell you its flowers make an excellent honey.



Female *Ilex glabra*  
with black fruit



Jim Resch

Then there are the berries. A lustrous black in color, they may never compete with red-berried hollies for a Christmas card illustration. Dirr says these black fruits are “seldom a cause for celebration”, but many birds would beg to disagree. Inkberries’ carbohydrate-rich pulp provides a source of energy for overwintering songbirds such as robins, thrushes, and mockingbirds even in deep winter when other food sources have disappeared. With all these benefits for wildlife, it is little wonder that our enthusiasm for this native holly has increased in recent years.

As more and more native-friendly gardeners are planting inkberries, people are asking how they can maximize their

fruiting. The standard advice for most hollies is always to plant a compatible male in the vicinity to ensure good pollination, but a visit to a local nursery is likely to afford only one of several female clones, such as ‘Nigra’, ‘Densa’, ‘Compacta’, and ‘Shamrock’. Where can we find the males?

A perusal of holly publications and plant catalogs provides very few leads. ‘Pretty Boy’ was once promoted by Rarefind Nursery as a useful male clone, but it is currently unavailable. This is also the case for ‘Sandpiper’, a selection from the wild once sold by McLean Nurseries. This brings us to ‘Chamzin’ (trademarked and sold as Nordic™), which is reported by some to be a male inkberry. This compact selection is still grown and distributed by Lake County Nursery in Perry, Ohio, where the late Jim Zampini discovered and introduced it in the 1980s. We recently obtained Nordic™ and found it to have female flowers, and bear small black fruit. The nursery’s current owner Joe Zampini (Jim’s son) confirms that Nordic™ is in fact female,<sup>3</sup> and so our search for a male continues.

We reluctantly conclude that, apart from any wild populations of *Ilex glabra*, there are few if any male inkberries in today’s landscape. And yet, many of us have seen female inkberries with nice crops of black fruit. What accounts for this? Are some female inkberries self-fertile, requiring no pollen whatsoever to set fruit? Or could it be that female plants bear a few “perfect” flowers, bearing both male and female reproductive structures? An even more intriguing possibility is that males from another species of holly provide the pollen necessary for inkberries to set fruit. We may speculate, without any proof whatsoever, about the males of *Ilex crenata*, a fairly closely related holly from Japan, which just happen to bloom at the same time as *Ilex glabra*. Proving that they actually do contribute to the latter’s pollination is another matter.



Clearly, the best option would be for one of our Holly Society members to select a nice male *Ilex glabra* from among a crop of seedlings, and then propagate it for introduction to the nursery trade. There seems to be a significant pent-up demand for such a male. It needs a good descriptive name, and one that's easy to remember. Come to think of it, 'Native Son' might just catch on. Feel free to use it once you've selected a seedling.

<sup>1</sup> Michael A. Dirr and John H. Alexander III, "*Ilex glabra* – the Inkberry Holly", *Arnoldia*, vol. 51 no. 2, 17-22 (1991).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Clark, "Growing Newer and Better Hollies", *Holly Letter*, No. 50, 1-2 (1974).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Zampini, personal communication to the author, July 6, 2020.





# International *Ilex* Cultivar Registrations

By Michael R. Pontti  
Holly Registration Chair

The Registration Committee reviewed and accepted three new holly registrations in 2019/2020 to the present. The following holly registrations are complete and Holly Certificates will be issued. The newly registered holly cultivar names are listed below.



Sue Hunter

## 7-19 *Ilex opaca* 'Forest Totem'

Female

Registered: December 30, 2019

Susan Hunter

8957 Hickory Road

Felton, Pennsylvania 17322

The original plant, now nearly nine years old, was a chance seedling collected in an open field on an island in the Susquehanna River near Holtwood, Pennsylvania.

The original plant is an upright columnar to fastigiate tree approximately 4.6 m (15 ft) tall and 92 cm-1.2 m (3 – 4 ft) wide. The plant displays a fastigiate branching habit. On mature trees, annual growth of about 25-30 cm (10-12 inches) on the leader and on lateral branch tips is typical.

The leaf texture is coriaceous, while the leaves are flat in cross section to slightly keeled, and glabrous. They are oblong in shape, with the largest leaves up to 13 cm (5 in) long by 5.8 cm (2 1/4 in) wide. The leaf bases are rounded. Margins are generally slightly undulate to convex in side view, with 4 spines per side. Apices are aristate, with a tip spine of 2-3 mm (1/16-1/8 in). Petioles are up to 9 mm (3/8 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are yellow green in color, Yellow Green Group N138B on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2015.

The plant bears pistillate flowers on 1<sup>st</sup> year growth, as is typical for *Ilex opaca*. After flowering, the pistils of 'Forest Totem' enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen in November to fruit of a dark red color, Red Group 44A on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2015. Fruits are rounded in side view and rounded in cross section, and measure 8 mm (5/16 in) long by 7 mm (1/4 in), with peduncles 5 mm (3/16 in). Fruits are typically borne singly.

Long-term survival in Zone 6b/7a has been demonstrated. Plants have been grown from rooted cuttings by Sue Hunter of Heartwood Nursery of Felton, Pennsylvania, since 2011, and evaluated for hardiness and consistency in growth habit.

'Forest Totem' was selected based on its upright columnar shape, fastigiate branching and growth habit and a leaf longer than typical for the species. Voucher specimens are on deposit in the herbarium of the U.S. National Arboretum (NA), Washington, D.C. 20002.

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### 8-19 *Ilex opaca* 'Sundown'

Female

Registered: December 31, 2019

Susan Hunter

8957 Hickory Road

Felton, Pennsylvania 17322

The original plant, now nearly twelve years old, was a chance seedling collected in an open field near Felton, Pennsylvania, and Heartwood Nursery.

The original plant has a conical shape, approximately 4.3m (14 ft) tall and 1.5m (5 ft) wide. The plant displays a horizontal or herringbone branching habit. On mature trees, annual growth of about 25-30 cm (10-12 in) on the leader and on lateral branch tips is typical.

The leaf texture is coriaceous, while the leaves are flat in cross section to slightly keeled, and glabrous. They are oval in shape, with the largest leaves up to 14 cm (5 1/2 in) long by 8.3 cm (3 1/4 in) wide. The leaf bases are cuneate. Margins (side view) are generally undulate and spinose (top view) with five spines per side, and petioles to 1.3 cm (1/2 in). Apices are acuminate, with a tip spine of 2-3 mm (1/16 – 1/8 in). Petioles are up to 1.3 cm (1/2 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are moderately yellowish green, 139B on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2015.

The plant bears pistillate flowers on 1<sup>st</sup> year growth, as is typical for *Ilex opaca*.



Sue Hunter

After flowering, the pistils of ‘Sundown’ enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen in November to fruit of a vivid reddish orange, Red Group 44B on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2015. Fruits are rounded in side view and rounded in cross section, and measure 11 mm (7/16 in) wide and long, with peduncles 7 mm (1/4 in). Fruits are typically borne singly.

Long-term survival in Zone 6b/7a has been demonstrated. Plants have been grown from rooted cuttings by Sue Hunter of Heartwood Nursery of Felton, Pennsylvania, since 2017, and evaluated for hardiness and consistency in growth habit.

‘Sundown’ was selected, based on its dense branching habit, darker than usual leaf color, consistent heavy berry set and larger than typical fruit.

Voucher specimens are on deposit in the herbarium of the U.S. National Arboretum (NA), Washington, D.C. 20002.



**1-20 *Ilex* [*aquifolium* 'Lewis' x (*cornuta* x *pernyi*)  
'John T. Morris'] 'Irish Eyes'**

Female

Registered: January 10, 2020

James F. Resch

5 Heather Loft Court

Bear, Delaware 19701



Jim Resch

The original plant germinated as a chance seedling, beneath the female *Ilex aquifolium* 'Lewis' on his property in Bear, Delaware, during the summer of 2008. The seedling showed exceptionally dark green and glossy foliage, and because of its promising appearance was dug and moved to a container in October 2008. It has since been planted in the landscape at the edge of a wooded area. The name 'Irish Eyes' was chosen in reference to the deep green color of the plant's foliage. The male parent of 'Irish Eyes' is presumed to be a nearby *Ilex cornuta* x *pernyi* 'John T. Morris', which bloomed heavily and with an overlapping blooming period to that of 'Lewis' in the preceding years. Assuming this to be correct, the proposed name of the hybrid would be: *Ilex* [*aquifolium* 'Lewis' x (*cornuta* x *pernyi*) 'John T. Morris'] 'Irish Eyes'.



Jim Resch



The original parent plant is an evergreen, conical shrub, currently 1.8 m (68 in) tall and 1.3 m (52 in) wide, with a trunk diameter of 3.8 cm (1.5 in) at eleven years old. The plant also displays a herringbone branching habit.

The leaves of 'Irish Eyes' are obovate/quadrangular, up to 5.1 cm (2 in) long and 3.5 cm (1 3/8 in) wide. Margins in top view are spinose, typically with two sharp spines per side. In side view, the leaves are slightly convex. Apices are acute, with a sharp apical spine of 1 mm (1/32 in), with the tip moderately reflexed. The bases are rounded. Leaves are coriaceous, very glossy, and a deep green color, Green Group N137A

on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2007, but this color may darken further during the cold winter months. Petioles are 4 mm (3/16 in) long.

The plant bears pistillate flowers with 4 yellowish-white petals and 4 underdeveloped stamens each, fasciculate, and borne in leaf axils on 2<sup>nd</sup> year growth. Flowering typically begins in April in Zone 7a and is therefore early in the holly flowering season. *Ilex* males with overlapping blooming periods include *I. cornuta* x *pernyi* and *I. x merserveae* hybrids, as well as *I. cornuta* and *I. aquifolium*. After flowering, the pistils of 'Irish Eyes' enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen in November to a glossy fruit of a bright red color, Red Group 44B on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2007. Fruits are globose, rounded in both cross-sectional and longitudinal view, and measure 8 mm (5/16 in) in diameter, on peduncles which are 5 mm (3/16 in) long. Fruits are typically borne in groups of three, in dense clusters up to 10 cm (4 in) long along the stem. Fruiting often begins in the first year of rooted cuttings.

Annual growth of about 15 cm (6 in) on the leader and on lateral branch tips is typical.

The plant has been grown in Zone 7a with no winter damage, but has not been fully evaluated for hardiness in colder zones.

'Irish Eyes' was selected based on its distinctively dark and glossy foliage, accented with bright red fruits. The leaf size is intermediate between that of *I. aquifolium* 'Lewis' and *I. cornuta* x *pernyi* 'John T. Morris', the putative parents.

In comparison to *I. cornuta* x *pernyi* hybrids ('Lydia Morris', John T. Morris', 'Doctor Kassab' and 'Hugger'), the leaves of 'Irish Eyes' are darker and somewhat larger, and the apical spines are less reflexed. The leaf shape and size of 'Irish Eyes' are somewhat similar to 'Pernella', another putative hybrid of *I. aquifolium* and *I. cornuta* x *pernyi*, but the leaves of 'Irish Eyes' are glossier and a darker color. Voucher specimens are on deposit in the herbarium of the U. S. National Arboretum (NA), Washington, D.C. 20002.

# The Shannon Chiles Story

By Joe W. Chiles, Sr.

Editors Note: *Ilex opaca* ‘Shannon Chiles’, an impressive female American holly with large, bright red fruits, was registered with the Holly Society of America in 1998. The supporting documentation (*Holly Society Journal* 16(3): 26-27 (1998)) indicates that the tree was named by Joseph and Louise Chiles of Louisville, Kentucky, in honor of their late daughter-in-law. The following story tells us much more about Shannon Chiles and her legacy, and may be found in its entirety on the Holly Society website.

In late 1985, Shannon Byne Chiles learned she had abdominal cancer, and by late summer of 1986 chemotherapy was started to try to prolong her life.

Shannon and her husband, Joe Chiles, Jr., were both employees of the Internal Revenue Service in the North Dade office in Miami, FL. Having exhausted all of their vacation and sick leave due to her extended illness and the care of their two small children, their fellow employees got together and sought to donate some of their own leave time to allow the salaries to continue for both Shannon and Joe.

They found, however, that federal law specifically prohibited this. Shortly thereafter, Miami Congressman William Lehman stopped by the IRS office on a courtesy call. The employees explained their problem and said it could only be solved by getting the Federal law changed.

Representative Lehman, a subcommittee Chairman on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, agreed to give it a try. Other congressmen advised him that it should be made into a study bill to additionally include three other federal employees with similar needs. The conclusion was that the bill had no chance of

*Ilex opaca*  
‘Shannon Chiles’



being directly introduced to the floors of both the House and Senate and approved during the last weeks of the 99th Congress.

Meanwhile down in Florida, the North Dade IRS office took up direct financial assistance and enlisted other IRS offices in the state. The Atlanta regional office heard of it and informed IRS offices across the southeast of their efforts. Fundraisers in the form of bake sales, pie throwing contests at supervisors, box lunches, and other events were soon being held in several states. Employees in these offices raised over \$15,000 in direct aid for Shannon and Joe.

Finally, only one piece of legislation remained – the major Appropriations bill of 1986, over which the House and Senate were deadlocked. The Federal government at that point technically had run out of money, and President Reagan dramatically sent all federal employees home one afternoon. As a result, a House-Senate Conference Committee quickly met to resolve their differences and keep the government running.

Senator Domenici (R-NM), in the meantime, learned of the study bill and agreed to take it up in the Conference Committee. The House and Senate each quickly added the Conference Committee report and immediately adjourned. President Reagan signed it into law shortly thereafter.

Shannon and Joe celebrated with a victory trip to Washington given them by Joe's parents. Visiting the nation's capital was something Shannon had always wanted to do. Many instances of heart-wrenching need from within their districts became known to congressmen. Regarding one of those selected, *Time* magazine called it "Giving a Buddy Your Break.

Shannon's health deteriorated steadily, and she died April 1, 1987, at the age of 35. Over two years of leave time had been donated to each of them by then, the balance of which was turned back to the donors. Joe was shortly granted a transfer to Louisville, Kentucky, to be near his parents and raise his two small children.

But Shannon's legacy continued on. The momentum for leave sharing grew nationwide, and the 100th Congress quickly took up broad leave-sharing legislation. Joe was invited to testify before the House subcommittee holding hearings. His emotional testimony was shown repeatedly on C-Span. Congressman Lehman, in his own testimony, offered the vision that leave-sharing might someday become an employee benefit in the business world. By October 1987 a permanent, government-wide bill was passed and signed into law. Thousands of people have benefited from since.

Joe later met and married Jeannie Rachford who was also an IRS employee. He died suddenly of an apparent heart attack in July 1998. His widow, Jeannie, is raising the two children, Joe III, now a 19-year old and sophomore at Georgia Tech, and Maggie, who is almost 17 and a junior at Ballard High School in Louisville.

Note as of 8/8/20: We did have a successful meeting with the horticulture staff at their off-site nursery. They expressed particular interest in a branch I had taken with red berries. They accepted all three small plants we offered which they grew in their nursery before being trans-planted in October 2017 to Nicholson Street in Colonial



Williamsburg to provide a partial screen from auto traffic behind the Charlton Stage that has daily outdoor programs, weather permitting. I regret that Louise passed away five months earlier.

August 2020: An update to the Shannon Chiles story many years later: Joe Chiles III now has two degrees from Georgia Tech, one in Chemistry and one in Biology. He graduated from medical school at the University of Kentucky and did his three-year residency at Ohio State. He's now a board-certified MD in Internal Medicine. Dr. Joe, as I now call him, is in the middle year of a three-year fellowship at the University of Alabama-Birmingham in Pulmonary and Critical Care, where he is involved in research as well as joint care of some 80 patients in the unit, many with Covid-19.

His sister Maggie graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in Nursing. After getting married to a great guy and having two wonderful children while practicing nursing for several years, she enrolled at Vanderbilt to get a Masters in Nursing. This was before my late wife, Louise, passed away but she didn't graduate until afterward. She's now a board-certified Nurse Practitioner in a busy practice in Russell County Kentucky, where they live. Maggie's in a new house on some acreage where she continues to hone her homemaking and gardening skills.

Their birth mother, Shannon, and their late father, Joe Jr., would obviously be very proud of them and so would Louise (not to mention me!).

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For more information and regional event notices go to [hollysocam.org/regions.htm](http://hollysocam.org/regions.htm)

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Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia. Contacts: Jane Y. Christy, Sue Hunter, Sandy Wilson

### New England

Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont. Contact: Mike Runkel, Chris Wiley, Chuck Wiley

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Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee. Contact: Dennis Superczynski, April Sanborn, Ray Head

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Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin. Contact: Joe Corio, Fred Vallowe, Karen Vallowe

### Western

California, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Washington  
Contact: Carole Cossaboon, HSA Secretary

### International

All countries and members outside the US.  
Contact: Carole Cossaboon, HSA Secretary

## HOLLY SOCIETY OF AMERICA COMMITTEES

The activities of the Holly Society are managed by groups of dedicated volunteers organized into various committees. Volunteers willing to assist with committee activities are always welcome; contact the chair to offer your services, or contact Sue Hunter, HSA President.

Holly Society of America, Inc., P.O. Box 803, Millville, NJ 08332-0803, U.S.  
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# Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest

Clermont, KY, USDA Hardiness Zone 6a

To plan a visit the Bernheim is currently operating on a timed-entry reservation system. Make sure to visit their website for information. [bernheim.org](http://bernheim.org)

## THE HOLLY COLLECTION

Planted under the careful eye of Bernheim's first horticulturist, Buddy Hubbuch, and named in his honor in the spring of 2000, the holly collection has evolved into one of the finest in North America. At the present time, the collection contains over 400 specimens representing more than 200 individual taxa from all across the northern hemisphere. Within the collection visitors will find 176 American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) cultivars, Japanese Holly (*I. crenata*), varieties of deciduous hollies (*I. decidua*, *I. verticillata*, *I. serrata*), and varieties of Inkberry (*I. glabra*), along with many unique hybrids.

The collection exhibits the tremendous diversity that exists within the genus *Ilex*. There are tree forms, large and small shrubs, some approaching ground cover status, and others as upright spires (consider the aptly named *I. crenata* 'Sky Pencil'). Some will grow 3 feet per year, while others only manage an inch or two. Leaves are evergreen, deciduous, spined or smooth-edged. Fruit on female plants ranges from white, to yellow, orange and many shades of red. There are hollies that are at home on dry sandy dunes, and others happier in low wet areas. Certainly within the hollies there is a variety for almost every garden use. The collection offers something beautiful to visit every month of the year.

As with all the horticultural collections at Bernheim, the holly collection serves several purposes. It is an important resource that serves as the basis for long-term evaluation and research aimed at identifying the best plants for this region's landscapes. In addition, the collections serve a valuable conservation function; preserving unique germplasm representing the breadth of physical and genetic traits that exist within the holly family. The maturing collections enable professional and amateur horticulturists alike, to compare the relative landscape potential of the many varieties represented. This irreplaceable resource also serves as a source of propagation material to help bring new and superior plant varieties into the marketplace.

Within the collection are several holly varieties selected and introduced to the landscape trade by Kentuckians. *Ilex* x *attenuata* 'Marilyn' was selected and named by Buddy Hubbuch in honor of his wife. It is an exquisite, fine-textured evergreen form with brilliant red-orange fruit in autumn and winter. *Ilex opaca* 'Judy Evans' was introduced by famed Louisville-area nurseryman Theodore Klein. This cultivar was selected for excellent quality foliage and vigorous growth. It awarded the State of Kentucky's coveted Theodore Klein Plant Award in 1999.

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