US00PP09485P

United States Patent [19]

Magee

[11] **Patent Number: Plant 9,485**

[45] **Date of Patent: Mar. 26, 1996**

[54] **ILEX HYBRID VARIETY NAMED 'CONAL'**

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[21] Appl. No.: **402,350**

[22] Filed: **Mar. 10, 1995**

[51] **Int. Cl.**[6] **A01H 5/00**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./65**

[58] **Field of Search** Plt./65

[56] **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

P.P. 8,792 6/1994 Fischer Plt./65

P.P. 8,793 6/1994 Fischer Plt./65

Primary Examiner—James R. Feyrer

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct variety of Ilex plant found as an openly pollinated seedling of Ilex Hybrid 'Mary Nell'. The new vareity expresses a very high concentration of anthocyanin in new growth which matures to a semi-glossy green color. This plant is superior in development of a dense, upright, pyramidal shaped canopy with attractive spiny leaves and an abundance of red fruit.

2 Drawing Sheets

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

The new Ilex variety was found as an openly pollinated seedling of Ilex 'Mary Nell', an unpatented variety, maintained in the Evergreen Nursery at Poplarville, Miss. The seedling was found in May, 1989. The new and distinct Ilex Hybrid plant of this invention comprises a novel and valuable holly plant of erect pyramidal habit and attractive reddish-purple new growth. The new growth of this plant is interestingly and clearly red due to anthocyanin, which is of distinctly higher concentration than in the parent variety. As with the parent plant, the plant of this invention may be advantageously employed as a specimen appointment, in either formal or informal groupings, and is very attractive in mass plantings. This plant is responsive to pruning and training and may be used in forming dense, attractive hedges, and maintained without an excessive amount of care.

Asexual propagation of the new plant by cuttings has been under Mr. Magee's direction at the same location. Several generations of the new plant have been evaluated and the distinctive characteristics of the plant have remained stable.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following are the most outstanding and distinquishing characteristics of this new cultivar when grown under normal horticulatural practices in Poplarville, Miss.

1. Dense, upright, and pyramidal in nature.

2. The Reddish/Purple color of the new foliage is unique and offers a novel and strikingly appelaing contrast of new foliage to old foliage in plants of this market class.

3. Hardy to Zone 7.

4. Heat and drought tolerant.

5. Fast growth rate under normal fertilization and moisture conditions.

6. Tolerates most soils from moist to dry and from sand to clay.

7. Relatively pest resistant.

8. Makes a very good hedge or screen.

9. Easy to root from cuttings collected any time of year.

10. Very desirable in planters.

11. Produces attractive red fruit in the fall which persist into the winter and may result in bird visitation.

12. Has the ability to be sheared and trimmed to be kept within prescribed limits.

13. Mature leaves are a semi-glossy rich green color with attractive spines.

14. Easily trained into a small tree.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The new Ilex Hybrid variety is illustrated by the accompanying photographic prints in which:

FIG. **1** discloses the dense, upright, pyramidal shape, and the reddish/purple new growth of the new variety.

FIG. **2** shows a close-up view of the attractive red fruit and mature foliage of the new variety.

FIG. **3** is a side-by-side photograph of (from left to right) the parent plant Ilex Hybrid 'Mary Nell', the new variety, and Ilex Hybrid 'Nelle R. Stevens'. The mid-winter photogrpah shows the new variety's dense, upright, pyramidal shape and slightly lighter mature foliage color.

FIG. **4** is also a side-by-side photograph illustrating the leaf shapes and sizes of (from left to right) the parent plant Ilex Hybrid 'Mary Nell', the new variety, and the Ilex Hybrid 'Nellie R. Stevens'. Also evident is the semi-glossy leaf of the new variety compared to the glossy leaves of the other varieties.

The colors shown are as true as is reasonably possible to obtain by conventional photographic procedures. The colors of the various plant parts are defined with reference to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart. Description of colors in ordinary terms are presented where appropriate for clarity in meaning.

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

The following is a detailed description of the new variety of Ilex based on my observations made of plants grown in wholesale commercial production practices, in greenhouses, and established landscape plantings in Poplarvilel, Miss.

Distinctive Characteristics:			
Characteristic	'Conal'	'Mary Nell'	'Nellie R. Stevens'
Height (Mature)	15–20'	15–20'	15–25'
Width (Mature)	12–15'	12–15'	12–15'
Leaf Length	2 ⅜–3 ¾"	2 ⅝–3 ½"	2 ¼–3"
Leaf Width	1 ⅛–1 ½	1 ⅛–1 ¾"	1–1 ½"
Leaf Color (Immature)	Greyed-Purple Group 187A	Yellow-Green Group 144A	Yellow-Green Group 144A
Leaf Color (Mature)	Closest to Green Group 139A	Green Group 139A	Green Group 139A
Leaf Glossiness (Mature)	Semi-Glossy	Very glossy	Glossy
Leaf Shape	Ovate to Lanceolate	Ovate to broadly Lanceolate	Ovate
Leaf Spines (Pairs)	9–11	9–11	2–3
Fruit Color	Red Group 53A	Red Group 40A	Orange-Red Group 33A
Flower Sex	Female only	Female only	Female only
Leaf Base	Obtuse	Obtuse	Obtuse
Mature Shape	Upright Pyramidal	Upright Pyramidal	Upright Pyramidal rounded with age
Hardiness	Zone 7	Zone 7	Zone 6

The parent plant of the new variety 'Conal' is Ilex 'Mary Nell' which originated from a controlled cross made in 1962 by Joe McDaniel at Tom Dodd Nursery in Semmes, Ala. The female parent was *Ilex* (*cornuta 'Burfordii'*×*pernyi*) 'Red Delight', a selection of Henry Hohman, Kingsville Nursery, Kingsville, Md. The male parent was Ilex latifolia. Ilex 'Mary Nell' was named in 1981 by Thomas H. Dodd, Jr. after Joe McDaniel's wife.

Ilex Hybrid 'Nellie R. Stevens', which is very popular in the industry, is a hybrid between *Ilex aquifolium* and *Ilex cornuta.* It was released by G. A. Van-Lennep, Jr., St. Michael, Md., in 1954. It is named for the owner, Nellie R. Stevens, Oxford, Md. This non-patented plant is comparable to the new plant, however, there are many differences. The immature foliage of the new variety is Grey-Purple Group 187A compared to Yellow-Green Group 144A of Ilex 'Nellie R. Stevens'. The new variety also has more spines 9–11 compared to 2–3, and is less rounded with age.

It is from the openly pollinated seedlings of the Ilex 'Mary Nell' plant that I found the new plant. This new variety will be sold under the trademark Cardinal.

Classification:

Botanic.—Ilex Hybrid 'Conal'.

Form: Dense, upright, and pyramidal.

Texture: Medium to coarse.

Heights: 15–20'.

Width 12–15'.

Growth habit; Upright, dense, and pyramidal shrub or small tree. Fast growth rate under normal fertilization and moisture conditions.

Foliage: Alternate, simple, evergreen ovate to lanceolate, and vary in size from 2⅜–3¾" long and 1⅛–1½" wide. The margins are serrate with 9–11 pairs of prominent spines. Leaves are almost flat. The spines vary in length and width from 1/16 to 3/16". The apex is acute and has a single spine. The base of the leaf is obtuse. The petiole is

¼–⅜" long. Mid-veins and laterals are impressed on the upper leaf surface and the mid-veins are prominent on the underside. The upper surface of the immature leaves are glossy, glabrous, and are Grey-Purple Group 187A. The lower surface of the immature leaves are Greyed-Purple Group 186B and matte. As the leaves mature the upper surface becomes closest to Green Group 139A and the lower leaf surface becomes Yellow-Green Group 146C. This mature leaf color persists through the winter. Although the mature leaf color of the new variety is closest to Green Group 139A, which is also the color of the parent plant, it appears to be a shade lighter when viewed in full sun. This could be due in part to the semi-glossy leaf surface of the new variety.

In 1992, the date of initial spring growth was March 10, in Poplarville, Miss. After the initial spring flush there was almost continuous growth until fall ending October 22, also in Poplarville, Miss. The growth was identical to the parent plant. When growth in full sun, the internode length of this plant and the parent plant is ⅝–1¼". When grown in light shade the internode length is 1¼–1½". As would be expected either plant grown in shade results in a taller less dense plant with larger leaves.

The average length of terminal growth of the initial spring flush is about 12" for a plant in full sun and about 14" when grown in shade. After this initial flush we normally trim the plant lightly and the plant then continues to grow about 8" until we trim it a second time in the early fall. The fall growth of about 10" then hides the cut limbs. We finish in the fall with a three gallon plant about 34" tall and 20" wide. I have not noticed a difference in vigor between this plant and the parent.

Although there are many variables involved it should take about 8–10 years for this plant to reach a mature height of 15–20 feet and width of 12–15 feet. In the landscape little or no pruning is necessary to produce a dense and pyramidal shrub in full sun. In shade, however, some trimming may be needed to produce the same effect. The lower limbs can be removed to produce a small tree with attractive gray-brown bark.

Stems: The young shoots and petioles have a pronounced purple pigmentation, Grey-Purple Group 187A, and are matte. As the stems mature they become Yellow-Green Group 144A. The stems tips (½–1") and petioles retain the purple pigmentation into the winter. After one or more years the stems are generally Grey-Brown Group 199C, glabrous and rugose. The pith is solid and uniform. Young and older stems are densely branched.

Flowers: Small, creamy yellow, inconspicuous, slightly fragrant, borne on previouse season's growth from March to May. Flower structure of this plant is identical to that of the parent plant. Buds are globular, Yellow-Green Group 144A, and without foliaceous appendages. Flowers are clustered in the leaf axils and are 4-merous. Unbranched pedicels are about ¼" long and Yellow-Green Group 144A. The four ovate petals are arranged regularly, united at the base, and imbricate in bud. The ovary protrudes from the recepticle and is Green Group 143A. There are four stamen with underdeveloped anthers which are White Group 155D. No pollen is produced. Blooms are small to medum in size, Yellow Group 2D, ⅜" diameter, and last on the plant in the garden 2–4 days.

Fruit: Drupaceous, globose, ⅜–7/16" diameter, borne fasciculate with 2–5 fruits on short unbranched pedicels ¼" long. Each fruit contains 4 pyrenes. Matures to Red Group 53A in mid — November in Poplarville, Miss. and persists into winter. Normally fruit set is heavy.

Culure: Grows well in a wide range of conditions and tolerates sun to part shade. Grows in nearly any soil type, from moist to very dry and sand to clay. Responds well to mulching and medium applications of fertilizer; prefers ph 5 to 6.5 Little pruning is needed. Can be sheared. Propagated with semi-hardwood cuttings any time of the year.

Pests: None serious

I claim:

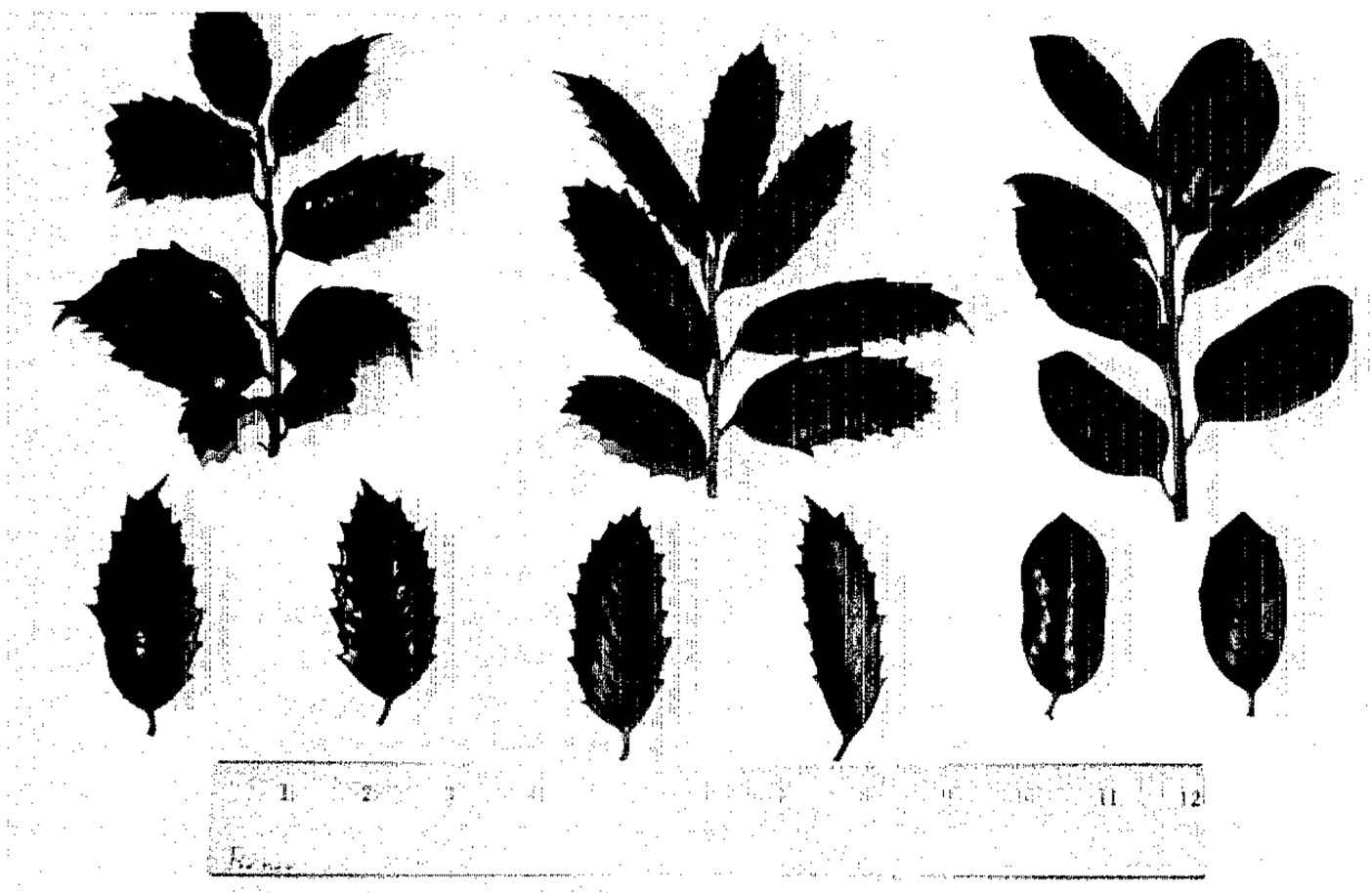
1. A new and unique variety of Ilex plant named Ilex Hybrid 'Conal' as herein shown and described, is characterized by its dense, upright, and pyramidal growth habit, unique juvenile foliage coloration, semi-glossy mature leaves, distinctly arranged leaf serrations, red fruit, fast growth rate, resistance to pests, and tolerance of heat, drought, and soil type.

* * * * *

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3



ILEX HYBRID 'MARY NELL'

ILEX HYBRID "NEW VARIETY"

ILEX HYBRID 'NELLIE R. STEVENS'

FIG. 4