

2-19 *Ilex opaca* 'Charlie's Church'

Female

Registered: January 14, 2019

James F. Resch for the Anderson family.

5 Heather Loft Court

Bear, Delaware 19701

The original plant was a chance seedling found in a field adjacent to a garden in Annapolis, Maryland by Charles R. Anderson. The seedling was moved to his home in Owings Mills, Maryland, in 1961, part of a group of hollies which also included *I. x opaca* 'Charlie's Angel' (see Holly Society Journal 29 92): 25-26 (2011) ) Whereas Charles labeled it simply as 'Church', in more recent years, the plant has entered circulation as 'Charlie's Church'. Charles often spoke of this holly as one of his favorites. And the name may refer to his use of its cut branches to decorate his family's church.

The original parent plant is an upright, broadly pyramidal tree approximately 11 m (36 ft) tall and 8 m (26 ft) wide. The trunk has a diameter of 41 cm (16 in) at the base. The plant displays a horizontal branching habit. Annual growth of up to 30 cm (12 in) on the leader and lateral branches is typical.

The leaf texture is coriaceous, while the leaves are somewhat curled, keeled, and glabrous. They are oval in shape, with the largest leaves 5.0 cm (2.0 in) long and 4.0 cm 1.6 in) wide. The bases are acute. The margins are undulate in side view and spinose in top view, with 4-5 spines per side. Apices are acuminate, with a tip spine of 2-3 mm (1/16 – 1/8 in). Petioles are up to 6 mm (0.24 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are yellow-green in color, Yellow Green Group 148A on the Royal Hort Society Colour Chart of 2007.

The plant bears pistillate flowers on 1<sup>st</sup> year growth, as is typical for *Ilex opaca*. After flowering, the pistils of 'Charlie's Church' enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen in November to fruit of a bright red color, Red group 46B (Royal Hort Society Colour Chart of 2007). Fruits are rounded in side view and rounded in cross section, and measure 8 mm (5/16 in) long by 8 mm (5/16 in) wide, on peduncles which are up to 8mm (5/16 in) long. Fruits are typically borne singly, and in great abundance.

Long term survival in Zone 6b/7a has been demonstrated, with a recorded low temperature of -24 degrees C (-12 degrees F) in January 1994 causing no damage.

Plants have been grown from rooted cuttings by William Kuhl of McLean Nurseries in Parkville, Maryland, and Sue Hunter of Heartwood Nursery in Felton, Pennsylvania, and offered for sale for the past several years.

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‘Charlie’s Church’ was selected based on attractive dense foliage, abundant red fruit, fast growth, and upright pyramidal shape. Relative to typical wild type *I. opaca*, the tree displays especially heavy fruiting without any sacrifice of annual growth rate.

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