

3-18 *Ilex cornuta* 'Charlie's China Doll'

Female

Registered: December 18, 2018

James F. Resch for the Anderson family

5 Heather Loft Court

Bear, Delaware 19701

The selection originated about 1960, as an unlabeled plant in a mixed delivery of hollies from a nursery, and was subsequently grown at the home of Charles R. Anderson, 11801 Greenspring Avenue in Owings Mills, Maryland. Charles referred to the plant as 'China Doll', but the name 'Charlie's China Doll' is being used for registration at the request of the Anderson family.

The original plant was used as a foundation planting at the Owings Mills residence and is a mounded, multi-stemmed shrub, 4.6 m (15 ft) tall by 4.6 m (15 ft) wide and a herringbone branching habit. The leaves are typically oval to slightly ovate, generally flat in cross section, and slightly bullate. The margins in side view show little to no undulation and are convex. The largest leaves are approximately 8 cm (3 1/8 in) long and 4 cm (1 9/16 in) wide. The bases are rounded to sub-acute. Apices are acute with a sharp apical spine of 1-2 mm ((1/32 – 1/16 in), with the tip only moderately reflexed. Margins typically feature just one spine of 1-2 mm per side (1/32-1/16 in) "horns", symmetrically arranged near the apex. These are directed distally, and not upturned. Basal horns are typically lacking, or if present on an occasional leaf, are much reduced. The occasional leaf may be found with margins entire and only a single, apical spine. Leaves are simple, coriaceous and of heavy substance, glossy, and a deep green color, Green group N137 A on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2007. Petioles are 6-8 mm (3/16-5/16 in) long.

The plant bears pistillate flowers with 4 yellowish-white petals and 4 underdeveloped stamens each, fasciculate and borne in leaf axil on 2<sup>nd</sup> year growth. Flowering typically begins mid- to late 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 meserveae* hybrids, as well as *I. cornuta* itself. After flowering, the pistils enlarge to become oblong drupes, which ripen in November to a glossy fruit of a bright red color, Red group 45A on the Royal Hort. Society Colour Chart of 2007. Fruits are oblong in side view (and rounded in cross section), and measure 12 mm (slightly less than 1/2 in) long by 9 mm (slightly less than 3/8 in) wide, on peduncles which are 5-12 (3/16-slightly less than 1/2 in) long. Fruits are borne in tight clusters, either singly, in pairs, or in threes. Fruit set is generally abundant, but the trees may also alternate of heavy and light fruiting.

Plants have been grown from rooted cuttings by William Kuhl of McLean Nurseries, and offered for sale under the name 'China Doll' since the early 2000s. Well-branched of 'China Doll' in 1-gallon containers were distributed as part of the Test Holly Program at the HSA National Meeting at Hunt Valley, Maryland in 2015, as briefly described in the *Holly Society Journal*, 33 (2): 40-41 (2015). 'China Doll' is also growing in Arboretum Bokrijk in Belgium, thanks to Albert Neel taking cuttings from Charles Anderson's plant (*Holly Society Journal*, 27(1&2): 7-9 (2009)). Cuttings have also been sent to Chollipo Arboretum in the Republic of Korea, where they have been rooted.

On mature trees, annual growth of about 13 cm (5.12 in) on the leader and lateral branch tips is typical. Young plants grown cuttings may produce two growth flushes and add 46 cm (18 in) of height per year, given adequate water and fertilization. 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.

'Charlie's China Doll' was selected based on its distinctive foliage characteristics and abundant fruiting. When compared to typical *Ilex cornuta* plants, the leaves of 'Charlie's China Doll' are seen to lack basal horns, are fatter, and the tip is less strongly reflexed.

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