

4-19 *Ilex aquifolium* 'Garner's Gold'

Female

Registered: February 23, 2019

Jeremy R. Garner

Nandina, Cansey Lane

Bradfield, Manningtree

Essex, Untied Kingdom

The original plant, grown in a garden at East Malling, Kent from a single shoot mutation found on an old holly tree growing in old park land surrounding Bradbourne House (Headquarters of East Malling Research - the fruit research station.) The rooted cutting of this shoot grew on and in 1989 when the photo of the original tree was taken, it was a 3m (10 ft) tree. The family home was subsequently sold, along with the tree, but the selector/discoverer, Robert J. Garner, son, Jeremy, propagated several cuttings for himself and family. The tree in Jeremy's garden is now 3.7 m (12 ft) tall and is used for this registration.

The plant is an upright, columnar tree approximately 3.7 m (12 ft) tall and 1.8 m (6 ft) wide. The plant displays a horizontal branching habit. On mature trees, annual growth of about 3.1 dm (12 in) on the leader and on lateral branch tips is typical.

The leaf texture is coriaceous, while the leaves are generally undulate in cross section, keeled and glabrous. They are oval in shape, with the largest leaves up to 1.1 dm (4 in) long by 5.1 cm (2 in) wide. The leaf bases are cuneate. Margins are generally very undulate in side view and spinose in top view, with up to 7-8 spines per side. Apices are acuminate, with a tip spine of 3-4 mm (1/8 to 3/16 in). Petioles are up to 1.6 cm (5/8 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are variegated of the Aurea Group (yellow) further divided into Aurea Medio-Picta (yellow variegation in the center of leaf), with dark green longitudinally (green in color, Yellow-Green Group 146A) and a creamy yellow center (yellow in color, Yellow Group 4C) blotch in the center, arising all along the midrib, on the Royal Hort Society Colour Chart, 1995. Occasional shoots revert to green, but often leaves which appear green to start develop a yellow center as they mature.

The plant bears pistillate flowers, which are small, white, fragrant flowers borne in the leaf axils on old growth and often subject to late frost damage, as is typical for *Ilex aquifolium*. After flowering, the pistils of 'Garner's Gold' enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen to fruit of a light red color. The typical fruits are red, 5-10 mm (3/16 – 3/8 in) diameter. Plant quarantine regulations, however, have prevented the Registrar from viewing the fruit of this clone firsthand.

Long term survival in Zone 7 has been demonstrated, and many *Ilex aquifolium* cultivars are now be listed as being hardy in Zone 6. This selection has survived 20 + years in southern England without damage.

‘Garner’s Gold’ was selected based on its columnar shape and the vivid Aurea Medio Picta variegation along the center blotch of the leaf and the fact that it is female, unlike many variegated English holly cultivars. The tree carries a good crop of fruit in late autumn, which in England, are usually devoured by the birds by Christmas.

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