

5-19 *Ilex cornuta* 'Seoul Man'

Male

Registered: May 10, 2019

James F. Resch for William N. Kuhl

5 Heather Loft Court

Bear, Delaware 19701

In 1985, the Holly Society of America helped to fund a U.S. National Arboretum-led plant exploration trip to South Korea, and Dr. Willard T. Witte of the University of Tennessee was designated to receive the HSA's portion of the expedition's germplasm. As a result Dr. Witte received small seedlings of *I. cornuta* collected from a schoolyard on the Pyonsan Peninsula on the southwest coast of Chollapuk-Do Province. The female parent plant of these seedlings was documented as having been dug from the population of the northernmost stand of *I. cornuta* in South Korea. These seedlings were grown in a greenhouse at the University of Tennessee, and cuttings of surviving plants were taken in the summer of 1986. Some of the small rooted cuttings, numbered CH-1 to CH-129, were distributed to participants of the Holly Society Annual Meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee, in October 1986 (see Holly Society Journal 6 (1): 11-14 (1988) and Holly Society Journal 19 (1): 11-15 (2001)). William Kuhl received a cutting labeled CH-121, which he grew at a property adjacent to his nursery in Parkville, MD. After sprigs of CH-121 won first place in numerous sprig contests, Bill named the plant 'Seoul Man', a play on words, in reference to the plant's Korean origin. The original plants from the CH-series in Tennessee have been bulldozed by the University. And there are no patent or intellectual property restrictions pertaining to the plant (communication from Willard Witte, July 22, 2018).

The oldest existing plant in Parkville, Maryland, at 32 years old, is an upright, mounded, multi-stemmed shrub, 3.0 m (10 ft) tall and 7.6 m (25 ft) wide. The foliage was once quite dense but the plant is now in heavy competition from nearby trees. The trunk is about 25.4 cm (10 in) in diameter at the base. The plant displays a horizontal branching habit. A twelve year-old cutting, grown as a single-trunked tree, has reached 4.0 m (13 ft) tall and 2.4 m (8 ft) wide. Average annual growth is up to 30 cm (12 in).

The foliage of 'Seoul Man' displays pronounced heterophylly, in which highly spinose leaves on juvenile foliage are accompanied by mature foliage with entire margins. The voucher specimens accompanying this application are representative of the mature foliage form. Mature form leaves

are very glossy on the upper surface, coriaceous, and glabrous. The largest leaves are broadly oval, approximately 5.8 cm (2 ¼ in) long and 3.6 cm (1 3/8 in) wide. Margins are convex in side

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view and entire in top view. The apex is acuminate with a tip spine of 2-3 mm (1/16 -1/8 in), and is not significantly reflexed. The bases are rounded. Petioles are up to 4 mm (1/8 in) long.

Juvenile form leaves, which occur near the base of the plant, are very glossy on the upper surface, coriaceous, and glabrous. They are obovate (broader towards the apex), 6.2 cm (2 ½ in) long and 5.1 cm (2 in) wide. The apex is acuminate, with an apical spine of 2-3 mm (1/16-1/8 in), which is strongly reflexed. Marginal spines project farther from the stem than the apex. Bases are rounded. Petioles are 4 mm (1/8 in) long. Intermediate form leaves may appear on stems between those juvenile and mature forms, having a spine on one marginal side and the other side entire, or with an enlarged marginal lobe lacking a spine. All upper leaf surfaces are a deep green in color, Green group 136A on the RHS Colour Chart of 2007.

The plant bears fragrant, staminate flowers with 4 yellowish-white petals and 4 stamens each, fasciculate and borne in leaf axils on 2nd year growth. Flowering typically begins in mid-late April in Zone 7a and is therefore early in the holly flowering season. Flowering is consistently heavy and the plant appears to be an excellent pollinizer for *Ilex* females with overlapping bloom periods, including *I. cornuta x peryni* and *I. x meserveae* hybrids, as well as *I. cornuta* itself. Numerous flowers are also observed in the autumn. Towards the end of the spring flowering season, also in autumn, the plant produces some perfect flowers, each with 4 pollen-bearing stamens arranged around a small pistil. These perfect flowers occasionally transform into small, often misshapen (angled in cross section), red fruit, as has been observed in several *I. cornuta* males.

Plants have been grown from rooted cuttings by William Kuhl of McLean Nurseries, and offered for sale (initially labeled 'CH-121') since at least the early 2000s. Numerous plants have also been donated for auction at the Holly Society's annual meeting plant sales.

Long-termed survival in Zone 6b/7 has been demonstrated.

'Seoul Man' was selected based on its deep green, glossy foliage, spineless leaf margins on mature foliage, dense growth habit forming attractive sprigs, and abundant flowering properties. In addition to its long-term hardiness in Zone 6b/7.

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