

7-19 *Ilex opaca* 'Forest Totem'

Female

Registered: December 30, 2019

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The original plant, now nearly nine years old, was a chance seedling collected in an open field on an island in the Susquehanna, River near Holtwood, Pennsylvania.

The original plant is an upright columnar to fastigate tree approximately 4.6 m (15 ft) tall and 9.2 dm-1.2 m (3 – 4 ft) wide. The plant displays a fastigate branching habit. On mature trees, annual growth of about 25-30 cm (10-12 inches) on the leader and on lateral branch tips is typical.

The leaf texture is coriaceous, while the leaves are flat in cross section to slightly keeled, and glabrous. They are oblong in shape, with the largest leaves up to 1.3 dm (5 in) long by 5.8 cm (2 1/4 in) wide. The leaf bases are rounded. Margins are generally slightly undulate to convex in side view, with 4 spines per side. Apices are aristate, with a tip spine of 2-3 mm (1/16-1/8 in). Petioles are up to 9 mm (3/8 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are yellow green in color, Yellow Green Group N138B on the Royal Hort Society Colour Chart of 2015.

The plant bears pistillate flowers on 1st year growth, as is typical for *Ilex opaca*. After flowering, the pistils of 'Forest Totem' enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen in November to fruit of a dark red color, Red Group 44A on the Royal Hort Society Colour Chart of 2015. Fruits are rounded in side view and rounded in cross section, and measure 8 mm (5/16 in) long by 7 mm (1/4 in), with peduncles 5 mm (3/16 in). Fruits are typically borne singly.

Long-term survival in Zone 6b/7a has been demonstrated. Plants have been grown from rooted cuttings by Sue Hunter of Heartwood Nursery of Felton, Pennsylvania, since 2011, and evaluated for hardiness and consistency in growth habit.

'Forest Totem' was selected based on its upright columnar shape, fastigate branching and growth habit and a leaf longer than typical for the species.

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