

8-19 *Ilex opaca* 'Sundown'

Female

Registered: December 31, 2019

Susan Hunter

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Felton, Pennsylvania 17322

The original plant, now nearly twelve years old, was a chance seedling collected in an open field near Felton, Pennsylvania and Heartwood Nursery.

The original plant has a conical shape, approximately 4.3m (14 ft) tall and 1.5m (5 ft) wide. The plant displays a horizontal or herringbone branching habit. On mature trees, annual growth of about 25-30 cm (10-12 in) 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 oval in shape, with the largest leaves up to 1.4 dm (5 1/2 in) long by 8.3 cm (3 1/4 in) wide. The leaf bases are cuneate. Margins (side view) are generally undulate and spinose (top view) with five spines per side, and petioles to 1.3 cm (1/2 in). Apices are acuminate, with a tip spine of 2-3 mm (1/16 – 1/8 in). Petioles are up to 1.3 cm (1/2 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are moderately yellowish green, 139B 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 'Sundown' enlarge to become globose drupes, which ripen in November to fruit of a vivid reddish orange, Red Group 44B on the Royal Hort Society Colour Chart of 2015. Fruits are rounded in side view and rounded in cross section, and measure 11 mm (7/16 in) wide and long, with peduncles 7 mm (1/4 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 2017, and evaluated for hardiness and consistency in growth habit.

'Sundown' was selected, based on its dense branching habit, darker than usual leaf color, consistent heavy berry set and larger than typical fruit.

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