

International *Ilex* Cultivar Registrations

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4-22 *Ilex opaca* ‘Boiler Boy’

Male

James F. Resch

5 Heather Loft Ct, Bear, DE 19701

The selection originated as a chance seedling which germinated in the holly collection of James Resch in Bear, Delaware, in around 2007. The selected plant was one of three closely spaced seedlings, apparently from sibling seeds within a single fruit. The fastest growing seedling of the three was separated and grown in steadily larger containers, and was used in educational school presentations for several years. The plant first flowered in 2014. When the plant became too large to be readily transported between schools, it was planted out in Downingtown, Pennsylvania (Zone 6b) in 2017, at which time the plant was about 2 m (6 ft) tall and ten years old. The plant was named in 2020 for Boiler, a black and tan dachshund living at the Downingtown address.

The original ‘Boiler Boy’ is an upright, narrowly conical evergreen tree, 3.25 m (10.7 ft) tall and 2.21 m (7.25 ft) wide after 14 years. The plant displays a horizontal branching habit. Annual new growth of about 31 cm (12 in) is typical.

The leaf texture is coriaceous, while the leaves are stiff and keeled. They are oval, with the largest leaves up to 8.6 cm (3.4 in) long and 4.6 cm (1.8 in) wide. The bases are rounded. In side view, the leaf margins are slightly sinuate. In top view, the margins are spinose, typically with 5-6 spines per side, though occasionally with up to 9. Apices are acuminate, with a sharp tip spine of 1 mm (1/32 in). Petioles are 7 mm (1/4 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces of mature leaves are dark green, Green Group 137A, and somewhat glossy, while lower leaf surfaces are dull yellow-green, Yellow-Green Group 144A (Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2007).

The plant produces fragrant, staminate flowers in axillary cymes of up to ten flowers, on the current season’s growth. Flowering is in late May to early June in Zone 6b, typical for other *Ilex opaca* in that region. Flowers have four white petals and four stamens, each bearing an abundance of yellow pollen.

Propagation may be accomplished from semi-hardwood cuttings in August at ambient temperature, or in November with bottom heat. Propagation was begun in 2020, with limited distribution the following year. ‘Boiler Boy’ is available from Heartwood Nursery, and is planned for distribution in the Test Holly Program in 2022. Hardiness has been established in Zone 6b, but has not



been demonstrated elsewhere as of this time.

'Boiler Boy' was selected for its elongated, somewhat glossy leaves and narrowly conical upright habit.

The standard specimen is deposited in the herbarium of the U.S. National Arboretum (NA) in Washington, D.C. 20002.