

# ARNOLDIA



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## ILEX CRENATA AND ITS VARIETIES

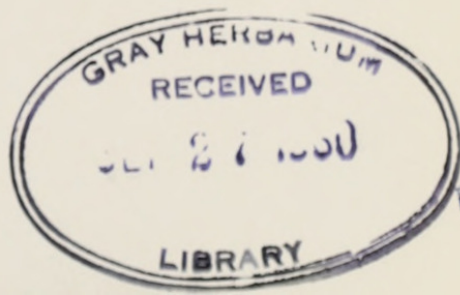
THE Japanese holly was introduced into cultivation in the United States in 1864 and has proved popular in all types of ornamental plantings. Its small, evergreen leaves and the dense, twiggy character of its branching give it qualities that make it useful as a specimen, a background planting or a hedge, since it withstands shearing very well indeed. American nurserymen have grown it from cuttings for a long time and have found that when seed is planted, numerous variations arise. In fact, there are so many now that if one studies the nursery catalogues carefully, one will find some 40 names purporting to be different varieties of this useful species and one nurseryman is known to have as many as 200 selected seedlings.

In order to assist those interested in making a selection among these plants, this issue of *Arnoldia* is devoted to a cursory study of the varieties. Some are so new that definite information concerning their performance is not available, and will not be for several years. Because many people are interested in the lower-growing types of shrubs, especially those which require no special care or spraying to combat insects and diseases, this is a group well worth noting.

Forty years ago there were only the species, the variety *microphylla*, and possibly one or two others available in the trade. Now there are forty names being listed, the most recent being one named 'Glossy' offered in an advertisement in the August 1, 1960, issue of the *American Nurseryman*. Certainly all are not outstanding ornamentals; some are not worthy of planting, and some of the names listed are merely synonyms of older, recognized varieties, or are so similar that from the standpoint of their use in the landscape, there is no appreciable difference.

### Recommended Varieties

**convexa:** A variety introduced into America by the Arnold Arboretum in 1919 and hardier than the species. Until the peculiar winter of 1958-59, this had not





suffered much injury, but during that winter it was badly killed over a wide area of the northern United States. Even at that, I think it is still an extremely worthy specimen, with small, convex leaves and rather widespreading habit, flat on top. Our forty-year-old plant is 9 feet high and 24 feet across. It will withstand clipping and makes an excellent substitute for box in the North.

**helleri:** Originating in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1925, this variety is very dwarf and compact. In fact, it is so compact and rounded in habit that it looks as if it had been sheared. Our 26-year-old plant is only 4 feet tall and 5 feet across, a splendidly moulded specimen. The leaves are about one-half an inch long. This was probably the first of the dwarf compact types of Japanese holly to be widely grown by nurseries in the United States.

**latifolia:** This is so popular that apparently it is offered in the trade under several names such as *fortunei*, *major* and *rotundifolia*. Actually these are all synonyms which should be dropped in favor of *latifolia*. The plant has rather large leaves for an *Ilex crenata* variety, they being about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and  $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{5}{8}$  inches wide and a glossy green. It is vigorous in growth, sometimes reaching a height of 20 feet.

**mariesii:** This is a dwarf variety with the small leaves bunched near the ends of the twigs and growing less than an inch a year. Sometimes it is listed as var. *nummularia*, but it is rather difficult to find commercially and thus is rare in cultivation.

**microphylla:** Low in habit with small leaves  $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$  inches long, this has been in cultivation in America for fifty years or more and has proved to be the hardiest of the older varieties. How its hardiness compares with that of the many newer varieties remains to be seen. Certainly it is as hardy as *convexa* and it is harder than the species.

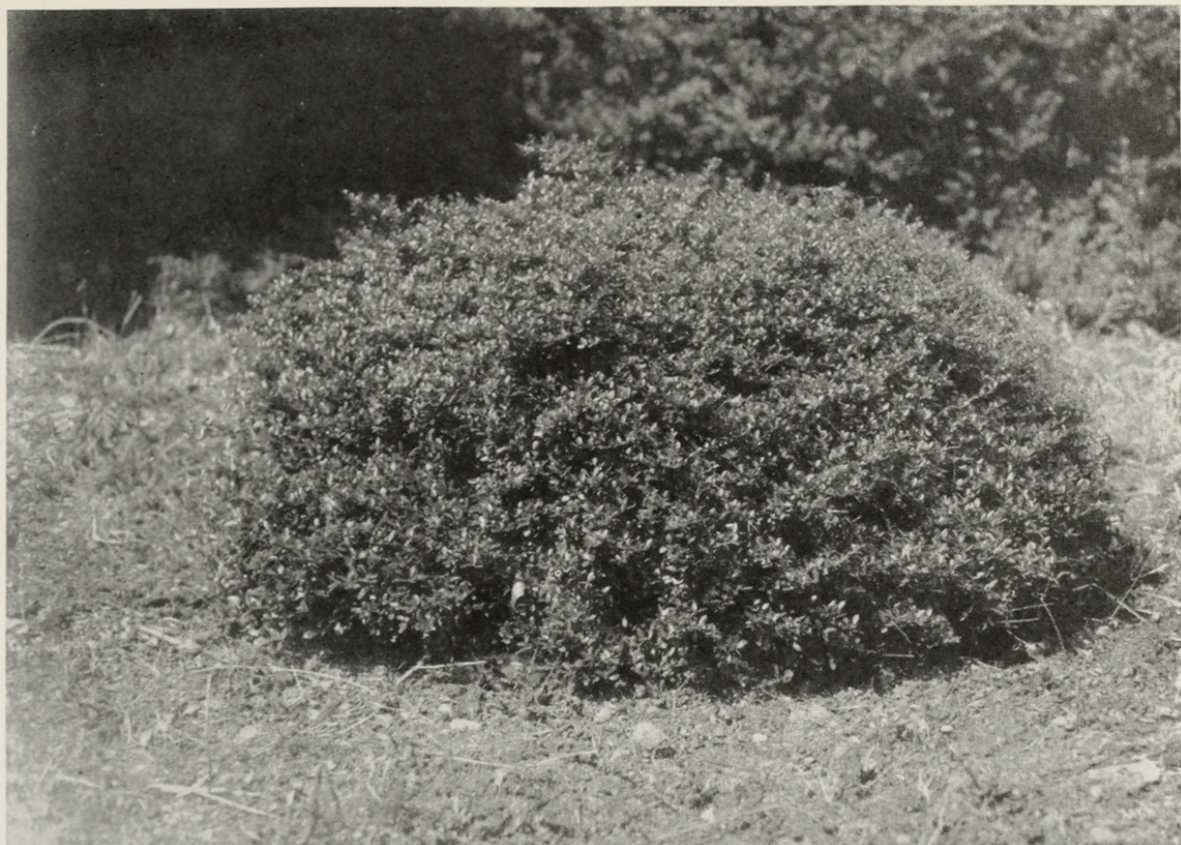
**‘Compacta’:** Dense and compact in habit, with leaves about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, our three-year-old plant is 3 inches high but 12 inches across.

**‘Glass’:** A male clone of *Ilex crenata microphylla* differing only slightly in that the leaves are slightly smaller. It is compact and upright while young but can become rather open with age.

**‘Green Island’:** Our eleven-year-old plant is loose and open (3 feet tall and 6 feet across), not nearly so compact as older plants of *helleri* and ‘Stokes.’ It was discovered in 1935 and introduced (Plant Patent #817) in 1949 by the Styer’s Nursery of Concordville, Pa. It is said to be more rapid growing than either *helleri* or ‘Kingsville.’

**‘Hetzi’:** A dwarf clone of *Ilex crenata convexa* originating in the Fairview Evergreen Nurseries of Fairview, Pennsylvania, and proving rather popular.





# PLATE X

(Above) *Ilex crenata helleri*. (Below) *Ilex crenata convexa* as a low hedge between two plants of *Ilex crenata latifolia*.



**'Kingsville':** A dwarf clone of *Ilex crenata longifolia* discovered in Maryland in 1912. The Kingsville Nurseries of Kingsville, Maryland, purchased this plant in 1926 and later introduced it. Mr. Henry Hohman has the original plant which is now 4 feet tall and 7 feet across, with leaves  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long. The plant has a low, rounded habit and is flat on top. It has not been known to bear fruit. It appears to be quite hardy, having withstood winter temperatures of  $-15^{\circ}$  F. without injury.

**'Kingsville Green Cushion':** A very dwarf clone with spreading habit. A 10-year-old plant was noted as being only 8 inches tall and 32 inches across. It makes a solid, cushion-like mass. The leaves are similar to those of *Ilex crenata helleri*, but the plant is much more dwarf and compact.

**'Stokes':** This plant was originally selected from a batch of seedlings by Warren Stokes of Butler, Pennsylvania, and was issued Plant Patent #887 in 1949. Our 12-year-old plant is 3 feet tall and 4 feet across, flat-topped and not quite so globose as is the variety *helleri*, but it is slightly hardier. This is a male clone.

#### Varieties Worthy of Further Trial

**'Canton' \***

**'Changsha' \***

**'Chengtu' \***

**'Foster No. 1'**—A selection of Mr. E. E. Foster, Bessemer, Alabama, said to be very low, compact and spreading.

**'Glossy'**—First introduced in 1960. Noted as being slightly faster and more compact in growth than *convexa*. Also noted as "extremely hardy," according to advertisement of Gerard K. Klyn Nursery, Mentor, Ohio.

**'Green Thumb'**—A dwarf female clone selected by John Vermeulen & Son, Inc., Neshanic Station, New Jersey, in 1950 and introduced in 1956.

**'Howard'**—A possible hybrid.

**'Kunming' \***

**'Maxwell'**—A possible hybrid.

**'Morris Dwarf'**—A clone of *Ilex crenata microphylla* with very dwarf habit and leaves  $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$  inches long.

**'Nanking' \***

**'Peking' \***

**'Red Lion'**—Said to be similar to the variety *helleri*.

**'T-one'**—A low-growing, small-leaved variety selected by the Tingle Nursery of Pittsville, Maryland, said to be very compact.

**'Shanghai' \***

**'Willow Leaf'**—A clone of *Ilex crenata longifolia*.

**'Yunnan' \***

\* These are seedlings named by the Styer's Nursery of Concordville, Pennsylvania. Of these, J. F. Styer thinks that 'Chengtu,' 'Peking, and 'Yunnan' will eventually prove best after the full trial period.





# PLATE XI

*Ilex crenata* varieties. 1, *I. c. 'Green Island.'* 2, *I. c. 'concreta.'* 3, *I. c. 'helleri.'* 4, *I. c. 'Glass.'* 5, *I. c. 'Compacta.'* 6, *I. c. 'Kingsville.'* 7, *I. c. 'Green Cushion.'* 8, *I. c. 'Stokes.'* 9, *I. c. 'Stokes.'*

### Plants and Names to Discard

*crenata fortunei*—Synonym for *Ilex crenata latifolia*.

“ *grandifolia*—Probably synonymous with *Ilex crenata latifolia*.

“ *longifolia*—Lanceolate leaves.

“ *luteo-variegata*—Leaves variegated, probably similar to *Ilex crenata variegata*

“ *macrophylla*—Probably synonymous with *Ilex crenata latifolia*.

“ *major*—Synonym for *Ilex crenata latifolia*.

“ *paludosa*—Only for use in swampy places.

“ *radicans*—Leaves coarse when compared to those of other varieties.

“ *rotundifolia*—Synonym for *Ilex crenata latifolia*.

“ *variegata*—Leaves variegated.

“ ‘Buxifolia’—Originated and named at Tom Dodd Nurseries, Semmes, Alabama, a few years ago, not particularly outstanding and unfortunately named ‘Buxifolia,’ which name in its varietal form has been determined a synonym for *convexa*.

“ ‘Lindleyana’—Originated in the Lindley Nurseries, Greensboro, North Carolina. Of dense growth, but differs little from other good selections.

“ ‘Longfellow’—Leaves rather large, male clone, poor grower, closely resembles *Ilex crenata microphylla*.

“ ‘Oleafera’—Not superior to recommended varieties.

“ ‘Tennyson’—Closely resembles *Ilex crenata latifolia*, but a “ragged” grower

“ ‘Upright’—Not outstanding, subject to chlorosis, somewhat similar to var. *latifolia*.

“ ‘Vaseyi’—Closely resembles var. *latifolia* but foliage loose and open.

DONALD WYMAN





Wyman, Donald. 1960. "Ilex Crenata and Its Varieties." *Arnoldia* 20(7), 41–46.

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