



Ilex 'Cherry Bomb'



Botanical Name: *Ilex* × 'Cherry Bomb'
(NA28255)

Hardiness: Not fully tested or documented. Hardy in USDA Zones 7-9, likely to Zone 10.

Development: 'Cherry Bomb' originated from the breeding program of William F. Kosar at the U.S. National Arboretum as open-pollinated seed collected from *Ilex* 'Nellie R. Stevens' during the winter of 1959-60. The male parent is believed to be *Ilex integra*. The plant was sent for evaluation to several botanical gardens, but was not pursued further by the National Arboretum. Several growers in the southern U.S., particularly Texas, recognized the value of this plant, and in the 1980s David Creech at the SFA Mast Arboretum began to call it "Cherry Bomb".

Significance: 'Cherry Bomb' has performed particularly well in Texas and the southern U.S., where its compact rounded habit, glossy dark-green spineless foliage, and ease of propagation and production have made it popular in the trade.

Description: **Size:** 3 feet tall in 3 years; 5 feet tall in 6 years in Houston, TX.
Habit: Compact, rounded habit, slightly taller than wide; can readily be kept at a manageable size with selective thinning or shaping.
Foliage: Glossy, dark, spineless, evergreen foliage.
Fruit: Large, bright red berries produced in abundance in the fall and persist until spring.

Propagation: Readily propagated by softwood or semi-hardwood cuttings. Cuttings are fully rooted in 5-6 weeks using mist and bottom heat.

Landscape Use: Foundation plant, mass plantings, mixed borders, medium-sized screen or hedge.

Availability: Limited availability from wholesale growers.