
Ilex crenata ‘Sky Pencil’



The U.S. National Arboretum presents *Ilex crenata* ‘Sky Pencil’, a unique form of Japanese holly that makes a living exclamation point in the landscape! The strongly fastigate, pencil-thin growth habit and lustrous, dark evergreen leaves provide a reliable vertical accent in the landscape. Even the smallest of spaces can accommodate this excellent and durable holly.



U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction
Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit





'Sky Pencil' Japanese holly

Botanical name:	<i>Ilex crenata</i> Thunb. 'Sky Pencil' (NA 57190)
Family:	Aquifoliaceae
Hardiness:	USDA Zones 5b–9
Development:	Discovered in the wild on Mount Daisen, Honshu, Japan, by Norihiro Shibamichi, this upright holly found its way to the private collection of Dr Masato Yokoi, Kawaguchi City, Japan. Dr Yokoi donated propagation material of this selection to Sylvester March, USNA, and Frederick Darke, Longwood Gardens, during a 1985 U.S. National Arboretum collecting trip. It was propagated and distributed as 'Sky Pencil' through the Elite Plant Program in 1992.
Significance:	A unique form of Japanese holly, 'Sky Pencil' has a naturally narrow and upright (fastigate) growth pattern.
Description:	Height and Width: 10 feet tall and approximately 2.5 to 3.0 feet wide at maturity. Habit: Tall, multi-stemmed, narrowly fastigate, evergreen shrub. Foliage: Lustrous, dark evergreen leaves typical of the species. Flowers: Female selection. Small, solitary, dull greenish-white flowers in May to June, in leaf axils of current season's growth. Fruit: A berry-like, dark purple drupe, 1/4 inch in diameter, ripening in September to October. Inconspicuous.
Culture:	Prefers light, moist but well-drained, slightly acid soils in either sun or shade. Transplants easily. Needs very little pruning to maintain growth habit. Chlorosis may occur if soils are too alkaline.
Propagation:	Roots easily from semi-hardwood cuttings taken in mid to late summer, under mist, 1000-3000 ppm IBA quick dip, in four to six weeks.
Landscape use:	Effective when used as a single specimen, as a dense, narrow hedge, or when mixed with other evergreen and deciduous plants. Well-suited to urban gardens and smaller spaces that require a strong vertical accent. Excellent for formal spaces or foundation plantings.
Availability:	Readily available from mail-order firms and retail and wholesale nurseries.

