

Plant Talk

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What's the Deal?

Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM & JN Plant Selections, LLC

by Michael Yanny

About a year ago, Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM sprouted an offshoot of sorts, in the form of a new business called JN Plant Selections, LLC. It is a plant development and introduction company owned and operated by yours truly, Michael Yanny. My company has purchased the rights (patents and trademarked names) to all of the plant introductions that had originated at Johnson's Nursery over the past 32 years. I also purchased all existing new plant research and development materials. Furthermore, I will continue to select plants from Johnson's Nursery's production fields. JN Plant Selections, LLC operates on leased land and facilities from Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM I work for the nursery on a part-time basis. These are the basics of the deal between the two companies.

Plant Talk Available Online

Each *Plant Talk* article is available online on the Johnson's Nursery website under the Contractor Sales section. Feel free to comment, ask questions or begin new topics! As always, Mike Yanny can be reached by e-mail:

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Mike Yanny & Chad Johnson are happy with their new deal.

JN Plant Selections, LLC and Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM have a special connection. Because the brand 'JN Select' was used by Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM for its many plant introductions, the name gives JN Plant Selection, LLC instant recognition in the marketplace. A goal of our two companies is to benefit each other. Because JN Plant Selections, LLC will be using leased Johnson's Nursery property, the nursery will have a front row seat in the continued development of superior upper Midwest regional plant cultivars. Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM will have the option of being growers of the JN Plant Selections, LLC materials as soon as they are released. In addition, they will have access to test a wide range of materials before they have been introduced.

My continued employment with Johnson's Nursery, Inc.TM allows me to continue to work at facets of my job that I have enjoyed for many years. I love writing *Plant Talk*! I edit and write other publications for the nursery as well. One of my favorite things to do as an employee of Johnson's Nursery is to giving presentations to gardening groups, professional organizations, and students. I advise the growers and sales staff as pertains to horticultural questions.

It really is a wonderful change both for Johnson's Nursery and me personally.

continued on page 2

What's the Deal? continued

I hope this has clarified things for all of you that have been confused by the JN Plant Selections, LLC/Johnson's Nursery, Inc.™ relationship. Now let's talk plants. After all, this publication isn't called *Plant Talk* for nothing!

Here is a sampling of the finest plants that I'm proud to say originated at Johnson's Nursery, Inc.™ and are JN Plant Selections, LLC introductions:

Firebird® Crabapple

Malus sargentii 'Select A' PP12621

I feel this is the best plant that I have selected to date. It is a wonderful small scale crabapple tree with absolutely stunning fruiting characteristics. The tiny crabapples are slightly bigger than a pea and have a cherry red color. Because the fruits don't readily soften in our climate, the birds leave them on the tree for the entire winter. They usually drop off in the spring about the time the tree flowers. Despite its name, Firebird® should not be considered a good plant for attracting birds. Nor should it be planted in an area where it can be a litter problem. Despite these two drawbacks the plant is absolutely stunning to look at for the bulk of the fall and winter. It gives us a bit of red color in the landscape when we really need it.



Technito® Arborvitae

Thuja occidentalis 'BailJohn' PP15,850

Technito® is a beautiful, compact form of Techny Arborvitae that was found in a production field at Johnson's Nursery. It is a First Editions™ plant and is co-owned by Bailey's Nursery and JN Plant Selections, LLC. The attraction of this evergreen is that it doesn't need to be sheared at any point in its life and has the same dark green, burn resistant foliage as Techny. Technito® is an outstanding long-term screening plant that can be used to increase privacy or wall off less desirable views. It is thought to have originated from a sport (branch mutation) of Techny Arborvitae.



Left: Firebird® Crabapple grafted on 42" standard.
Middle: The original Firebird® Crabapple in full fruiting glory!
Top right: Technito® Arborvitae on left and Techny Arborvitae on right. Both plants are 15 years old.

continued on page 3

What's the Deal? continued

Spice Island™ Koreanspice Viburnum *Viburnum carlesii* 'J.N. Select A'

Spice Island™ is a compact form of *Viburnum carlesii* that resulted from a seedling of *Viburnum carlesii* 'Compactum' at Johnson's Nursery. This selection has the same tight compact form as its mother, *Viburnum carlesii* 'Compactum' but is much more reliable in its branching characteristics. It has improved production characteristics. For instance, when a grower puts out 100 quart liners of Spice Island™ in the field he can expect to harvest 90 saleable plants. With *Viburnum carlesii* 'Compactum', a comparable plant in commerce, growers are lucky to expect a 50% harvest rate. This past season I noticed another improvement within this new cultivar. Spice Island™ Viburnum has nearly full leaf expansion before it flowers, allowing the inflorescences to have a rich green backdrop for its deliciously fragrant blooms. *Viburnum carlesii* 'Compactum' can look like blooms on sticks without a contrasting leaf background. I am learning more good things about this plant every year. In coming years, Spice Island™ will be promoted through the Garden Debut® plant introduction program of Greenleaf Nurseries in Park Hill, Oklahoma.



Spice Island™ leaves out before flowering and has early November fall color.



Above: *Sugar n' Spice™* showing heavy flowering. Left: *Sugar n' Spice™* fall color in early November. Below: 2 left rows are *Viburnum x juddii* compared to *Sugar n' Spice™* showing heavy flowering.



Sugar n' Spice™ Koreanspice Viburnum *Viburnum carlesii* 'J.N. Select S'

Sugar n' Spice™ is an exceptionally heavy flowering cultivar of Koreanspice Viburnum. It has smaller flower clusters than the average *Viburnum carlesii* but has many more of them. Their fragrance is just as wonderful as other individuals of the species. Sugar n' Spice™ is a standard sized plant, getting to 6-8' tall by 6-8' wide. Planting it by a patio or an entryway is an excellent way to take advantage of its outstanding floral characteristics. This cultivar originated from a seedling plant growing in the production fields at Johnson's Nursery. In coming years Spice Island™ will be promoted through the Garden Debut® plant introduction program of Greenleaf Nurseries in Park Hill, Oklahoma.

continued on page 4

What's the Deal? continued

Star Power™ Juniper *Juniperus* x 'J.N. Select Blue'

Star Power™ Juniper is a very fast growing, upright Juniper with star-like bluish green summer foliage. A 12 year old plant at the nursery is 12 feet tall and 7 feet wide. A good many Juniper cultivars would be only 2/3rds that size in that time. The plant is a female and has juniper berries once it reaches about ten years of age. Star Power™ Juniper shows resistance to deer predation in southeast Wisconsin. It is very useful for screening in full sun situations. The plant originated at Johnson's Nursery from seed collected off of *Juniperus chinensis* but is suspected to be a hybrid between *J. chinensis* and *J. communis*.

Firespire® Musclemwood *Carpinus caroliniana* 'J.N. Upright'

Musclemwood has been a species of interest to me since my college days in Madison in the late 70's. I am still fascinated by the genus and think this group of plants has the potential to be developed into some incredibly useful landscape plants. I foresee a day when Musclemwood trees are planted along the streets of Wisconsin and are in many yards throughout the area. Firespire® is the first of what I expect to be several *Carpinus* selections from JN Plant Selections, LLC. I selected Firespire® for its barrel-shaped upright form and spectacular orange-red fall color. The plant is somewhat slow growing, reaching 7 feet tall and 3-1/2 feet wide in 10 years. Firespire® makes an excellent screen for either full sun or shade and with light pruning can easily be kept even narrower than it grows naturally. I found the plant growing in a crop of Musclemwood seedlings in Johnson's Nursery's production fields in 1993.

I have discussed just a few of the outstanding plants now owned by JN Plant Selections, LLC that originated at Johnson's Nursery. Many more new cultivars will be introduced in the coming years.



Star Power™ Juniper has bluish-green, star-like foliage and a pyramidal shape.



Firespire® Musclemwood has colorful flowers, fruits, and leaves in early to mid-October.