



Shady Pond Tree Farm is searching for a moderately large greenhouse operator to propagate and sell Leighton Green-Gernon.

This new cultivar of Leyland Cypress was originated by Shady Pond in 2013. One of its distinguishing characteristics is disease resistance. Extensive field trials were performed by exposing the tree for long time periods to *passalora sequoiae*, the dominant Leyland pathogen. Unless it is sprayed monthly with a highly effective fungicide, Leylands will normally succumb to the disease in about two growing seasons. The disease resistance of Leighton Green-Gernon was confirmed and verified by Christmas tree researchers in genetics and plant pathology from North Carolina State University. And successful trials are maintained in Louisiana, Alabama, and in both North and South Carolina.

Evidence indicates that a natural mutation of a Leighton Green Leyland is the source of the resistance. That sport experienced a genetic shift that resulted in the production of cuticular wax. The optics of the wax also causes the tree to display a blue tint in contrast to the typical yellow tint normally associated with common Leighton Green Leylands. And in the world of Christmas trees, the wax also functions as an anti-transpirant increasing the useful life of decorated trees. Customer reaction has been intense to put it mildly. So, this new cultivar can now return Leylands to the landscape as well.

The Royal Horticultural Society in England agreed with all our findings and issued a Global registration of Leighton Green-Gernon on January 9, 2018. But as you would imagine the Covid-19 pandemic shutdowns slowed final development tasks significantly. With that miserable time behind us, work on Leighton Green-Gernon has resumed.

Although it is a small price to pay to have such a stunningly beautiful tree among us, the cuticular wax does complicate things a bit. Since the wax is a physical barrier, it must be penetrated to allow rooting hormones to access the plant tissue and enable root development in cuttings. So prior to sticking, the stem of the cuttings must be wounded.

Now that things are moving forward once again, Shady Pond hopes that a greenhouse operator will emerge soon. We plan to use a license agreement as a basis for this relationship. Those interested should contact Shady Pond Tree Farm at 985-863-5569 to discuss this opportunity further.

Clarke Gernon



Disease Resistant Leyland Cypress Field Trial
October 2016



Resistant/Susceptible Leyland Comparison
October 2017