Hort Report December 2017

Someone always brings this plant for our arrangements, and most people think it’s a holly, but it’s not. It’s Osmanthus heterophyllus ‘Goshiki’. True hollies, Ilex, have alternate leaves, and this genus has opposite leaves.

‘Oshiki’ has green spiny-toothed leaves splotched with creamy yellow, with pink-tinged new foliage. It’s a small evergreen shrub, about three and a half feet tall, by five feet wide. Kris mentioned she had one that grew much larger. Since it’s not reliably hardy in Zone 6, it should be planted in a protected location in full sun to part shade. Mine does well in full shade.

The tiny fragrant white flowers that can be hidden in the foliage are followed by blue-black fruit. Osmanthus is not native, but it’s an excellent shrub for birds to seek shelter in.

Another cultivar is ‘Ogon’, which has bright gold leaves that fade to gold-green, and grows best in shade.

Osmanthus ‘Purpureus’ has, as indicated by its name, dark blackish purple leaves.

O. ‘Rotundifolius’ has small rounded spineless leaves.