

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Reach for the Sky with First Editions Straight Talk Privet

BreAnne Nott

With the resurgence of hedging and screening plants into the marketplace, First Editions Straight Talk is a timely addition to the First Editions line.

Hardy in Zones 4 to 8, only 2-ft. wide at maturity and up to 12-ft. tall, this upright, columnar beauty is perfect for screening pesky neighbors or providing a vertical accent to any landscape. Add in cold tolerance and drought tolerance, and this adaptable *Ligustrum vulgare* is an excellent substitute for narrow upright *Ilex crenata* in colder areas of the country. With no viable seed set after six years of trialing, First Editions Straight Talk is a valuable addition to your product offering.

Kevin Johnston, Bailey Nurseries General Production Manager in the Midwest, says, “The plant seems to grow well; it sized up nicely in our bareroot fields with lots of body and branching. The columnar habit looks nice, should make for a nice hedge or specimen plant—especially in the northern climates where our selection is more limited.”

Likewise, Shane Brockshus, Bailey Nurseries West Coast Production Manager, says, “You know what you’re going to get.”



Growing information

- **Soil mix:** Average/regular mix with peat, pine bark, sand and compost. No special requirements.
- **Propagation:** Hardwood cuttings. The plugs can be overwintered. Cut back to 4-in. tops, and if smaller than 4-in., can simply prune the apical buds.
- **Pruning:** Dormant pruning. This is key so all of the lateral buds break. After the initial prune, you can do an additional pruning in late May/early June in Minnesota and still get regrowth. Containers that were overwintered and pruned dormant exploded with buds in the spring.
- **Moisture level:** Average/medium water usage.
- **Insects and diseases:** None. GT

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