

# IVY JOURNAL



**SPECIAL  
TOPIARY  
ISSUE**

*Hedera helix* 'Eva'  
Ivy of the Year 2009

## General Information

American Ivy Society  
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P. O. Box 2123  
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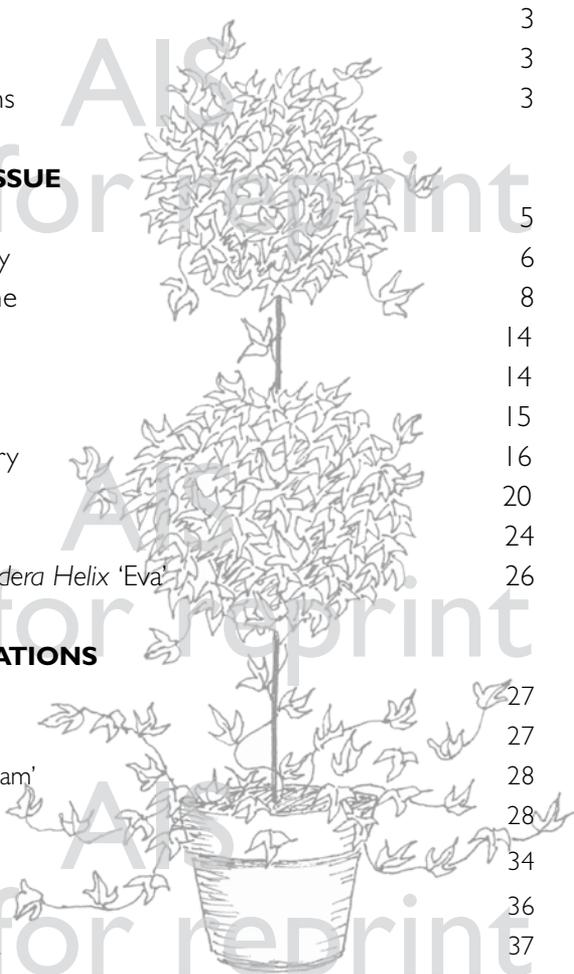
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Horse topiary at Quail Botanical Gardens, Encinitas, CA

Both photos by Rachel Cobb

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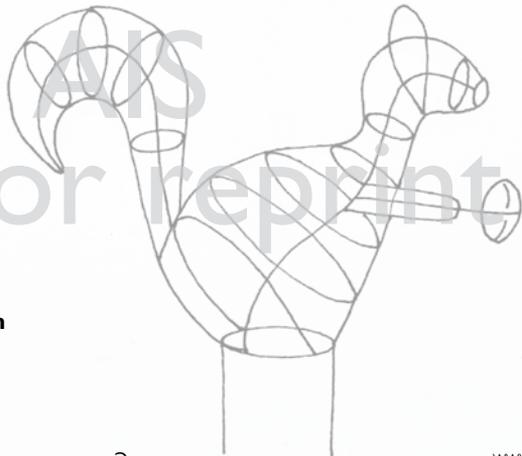
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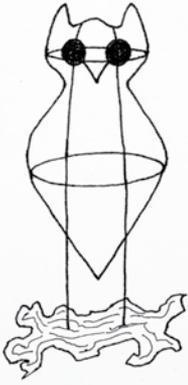
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# President's Message

Suzanne Warner Pierot

If you have never made a topiary, or even if you have, we hope this issue will be a help or an inspiration.

Topiary is the art of training and cutting plant material into living sculptures and it has been practiced all over the world for centuries. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, gardeners outdid themselves in shaping symbolic and geometric masterpieces out of trees and bushes. Boxwood, Privet, and Yew were the materials most used.

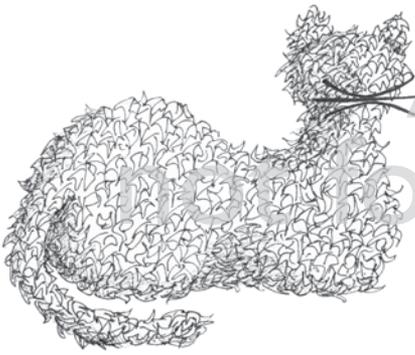
One drawback to these masterpieces is the length of time they take to complete – some five, ten years, others much longer. Then someone came up with the brilliant idea of using ivy, and now we have almost instant topiary. If you use a bushful of ivy cuttings, you can fashion a completed stuffed topiary in a day. Or you can start with a pot of ivy that has long runners and train them onto a frame. Both methods are described in this issue.

We have asked many experts to share their topiary secrets with us – from which ivy to plant, to the watering, feeding and grooming. Since many topiaries are kept in the house all year, we even have suggestions to make sure your ivy topiary doesn't get attacked by mites, those tiny insects that love our warm dry houses.

Our experts range from Joanie Finch, who with her husband Cliff, own "Cliff Finch's Zoo" topiary frame company, to articles by four of the prize winning ladies from the AIS Toronto Chapter. There are also suggestions by our very own Pat Hammer, past president of AIS and the author of Longwood Garden's book "The New Topiary". Those of you who attended the 2003 Philadelphia Flower Show probably remember her glorious larger-than-life topiaries of a Latin Cantina, complete with a Mariachi band, and a beautiful senorita descending a staircase. (See page 7)

If you haven't made a topiary before, we hope this issue will be a help. And do as AIS member, John Theis from Eastern Pennsylvania – take pictures of your topiaries and send them along to us.

Next year in June our convention will be hosted by the Toronto chapter of AIS. They're already working on some wonderful plans. Do hope you will join us.



## Pat Hammer's TIPS ON TOPIARY

Pat Hammer, past President of AIS, is the author of  
*The New Topiary, Imaginative Techniques  
from Longwood Gardens*

1. Make sure your frames are well made, artistic and recognizable before you add ivy. If it does not look like a dog before you start, it won't look like one after you add a coating of plants.
2. If you are a beginner, smaller does not make it easier. It does make it faster and cheaper. Sometimes larger frames are easier to manage because there is not as much detail.
3. Avoid moss filled topiary made with chicken wire. Since the moss should be constantly moist, the chicken wire can deteriorate in 1 to 2 years. Also, it is very light weight and can easily loose shape. Once planted it is very difficult to replant. And last, but not least, there are many sharp wires that can be hazardous to your health.
4. Once a moss filled topiary dries out, it is very hard to get the moss wet again. If possible, soak it overnight submerged in water.
5. There are many types of topiary: from woody trained up to moss-filled vine covered topiary. Pick the style that will fit your style of gardening. If you can only dedicate a few hours a month to gardening, perhaps the woody topiary is the best for you.
6. Choose plants that work best in your location. Full sun plants for sunny locations, shade plants for shady location, hardy plants for colder climates.
7. Choose a plant that fits the scale of your topiary. Do not choose an ivy with a 2-3 inch leaf if the frame is a 10 inch tall heart. You will never see the shape of the form.
8. Trained up ivy topiary are the best for indoors. Houses are usually dark, dry and have poor air circulation. This is hard on any plant but particularly hard on moss-filled topiary.
9. Just because you have a topiary dog does not mean you have to treat it like a dog. Remember, your topiary dog is just a plant growing in a very unusual container.
10. Have fun with your topiary projects. Be creative, be reckless, go wild. Who cares if the neighbor likes it. It's your topiary!

## Pat Hammer's

# TOP TEN IVIES FOR TOPIARY

- 1. Lady Frances:** How could anyone not love such a graceful lady. This ivy fits all, the requirements for a good topiary ivy. First of all the color is a beautiful green, gray and pure white and just looks like it belongs in every wedding and on every white dove. It is small, yet fast growing. It is compact and will cover moss-filled forms nicely. It sends out runners and makes beautiful trained-up topiary. It works in part shade but has done nicely in full sun. In the winter it can have shades of pink. It loves to be pruned and it is so well behaved.
- 2. Spetchley:** This funny little ivy is great for small moss filled forms. Its flat creeping habit helps to keep little critters well defined. It is very dark green and has very few insect problems. It likes to be on the dry side and can take lots of sun. It is slow so you must be patient.
- 3. Gold Heart:** This is my very favorite for trained up topiary. It generally grows one long trailing vine and only branches if the tip is pinched off. But these nice long dark green small heart-shaped leaves with bright yellow centers really make a statement. It is rather slow, so again you must be prepared to wait. Because it is slow growing and not self-branching it tends to be almost no maintenance.
- 4. Walthamensis:** This is a fast growing, small, dark green ivy that is so completely dependable. It is the staple of the topiary world. It works on all forms of topiary and always looks fresh and clean. It works on small topiary and large, too. It loves to be pruned and is readily self-branching. It is one of the hardiest of ivies, so does well in cooler climates.
- 5. Gold Child:** If you wanted a giraffe, tiger or just gold hair, this is the ivy to use. The gold color is consistent; the ivy grows fast and covers nicely. It does have a medium to large leaf so should be used on larger forms.
- 6. Midget:** Another great topiary for small moss-filled topiary. It is so readily self branching that one 6" pot with runners about 8" long could cover most of the tabletop sized forms. It is dark green and has very small leaves making it a great choice. Since it is so self-branching and dense, it might not be as happy in high humidity climates.

**7. Anita:** Is another ivy just like 'Midget', small, self-branching and fast growing. It's deeply cut foliage does give it a fancy, lacey appearance. It is also bright medium green and gives its forms a fresh look.

**8. Glacier:** This ivy has been around for a long time but it is another very hardy variegated ivy that can take frost. The leaf is medium to large and it needs to be on larger form. It tends to have long runner and only somewhat self-branching but we have used it on both trained up and moss-filled forms.

**9. Mini-Ester:** So tiny and white and very willing to do what you want it to do. We have used it on so many tiny small frames. It works so well on little 6" hearts and at the same time could make a great belly for a large teddy bear. It can be a little hard to propagate but once started it does not stop.

**10. Shamrock:** No list of plants for topiary would be complete with out Shamrock. It has very nice, dark green birdfoot foliage that tends to fold back over itself and cover most any topiary completely. I always called it the "dress-up" or "tuxedo" ivy because it always looks so rich and formal. It works great on trained-up and moss-filled topiary. It is the number one ivy for wedding hearts.

I could go on and on about ivies that work great for topiary. There are so many more wonderful cultivars like an oldie, 'Tennerife' and a fairly new one called 'Golden Snow'. I love 'Chester' and 'Tussie Mussie'. Other great ivies for trained-up forms are 'Tobler' and 'Green Feather'. We are so lucky to have so much variety in ivy. It's like having an endless palette of paints with! Experiment and find your favorites.



2003 Philadelphia Flower Show Latin Cantina, complete with a Mariachi band, and a beautiful seniorita descending a staircase.  
By Pat Hammer, Samia Rose Topiary.

Photo: Rachel Cobb

Editor's note: "Cliff Finch's Topiary Zoo" is one of the pre-eminent custom topiary makers in the United States. Their company made the topiary frames of a Hippo, Giraffe and Gorilla for the San Diego Zoo. For Cypress Gardens in Florida they made topiary frames for a carousel of ivy animals including a horse, ostrich, rabbit and rooster that turns to music. We have asked Joanie Finch for some of her tips.

# IVY ON A TOPIARY FRAME

By Joanie Finch

## WHICH IVY TO CHOOSE

Many plants can be used on a topiary frame, but there are several advantages to using ivy particularly if you start out with a long ivy vine. Also, many ivies are fast growers and significantly cut the waiting time for a finished topiary.

Not the least of ivy's attractions is the number of beautiful varieties available. If a project calls for tiny leaves or large leaves, speckled, spotted or curled leaves, there is a cultivar to do the job.

A small heart-shaped frame five inches wide can be quickly filled using varieties such as *H.h.* 'Spetchley', 'Anita', 'Shannon', 'Green Feather', or 'Lady Frances'. You'll need at least 4 to 6 strands of ivy long enough to bring up one side, wrap along the frame, and then reach the center, using two strands per side. I rarely use anything to attach the vines to the wire for these small shapes. I just let one strand help hold the other in place and tuck the ends underneath a previously wound strand. Winding the ivy close to the wire helps prevent loops that later could be accidentally snipped. You should avoid using large-leaved ivy on a small frame. The shape will be lost and the result will be a blob!

Most tabletop topiaries range in size from 12" to 35" high. Wreaths, standards, spirals, stars, candelabras, double hearts and similar shapes are perfect for ivy. Some of my favorite all green ivies for this size range include 'Shamrock', 'Duck Foot', 'Cascade', 'Tobler', 'Touch of Class', 'Tear Drop' and 'Telecuri'. If you want variegated ivies, my favorites are 'Gertrud Stauss', 'Golden Ingot', 'Golden Starlight', 'Schaefer Three', 'Lady Frances', 'Kolibri' and 'Eva'. Each has beautiful characteristics that make a topiary unique.

When you want a large wreath, cone or other geometric form you must choose either a larger leaf for faster coverage, or just wait for the smaller leaves to fill in. Using a little larger leaf on a 3 foot wide wreath helps give it a "fatter" look. I like the 2008 Ivy of the Year, 'Gold Child', for a gorgeous wreath that fills in quickly and also has beautiful winter color: 'California', 'Manda Crested' or 'Gold Dust' also will quickly fill in and look full and graceful on larger, simple frames. 'Walthamensis' is another fast grower that covers quickly and has a nice deep green color with veined leaves for added interest.

Large topiaries in containers can be complimented with compatible flowering plants such as begonias or impatiens round the bottom of the topiary. Variegated ivies are seen better at a distance, brightening up an area by illuminating it at dawn and dusk, where all-green will recede with less light.

## **FRAMES WITHOUT MOSS STUFFING**

Select a potted ivy plant with as many stems as possible and choose ivies that are smaller leaved with compact growth so any fine detail will not be lost. Self-branching ivy varieties such as 'Cascade', 'Emerald', 'Shamrock' and 'Lady Frances' work well.

For animal or human shapes, I first wind strands of ivy stems around each of the wire parts. Once each of the wires has a stem around it, I stretch the ivy strands between the open spaces slipping the stems under the other strands to hold them in place, eventually filling in the open spaces. If it needs to be tied, I use thin narrow green stretch ties and double knot them tightly. This is not instant topiary, but depending on the length of the stems and fullness of the plant, it can look very good right away.

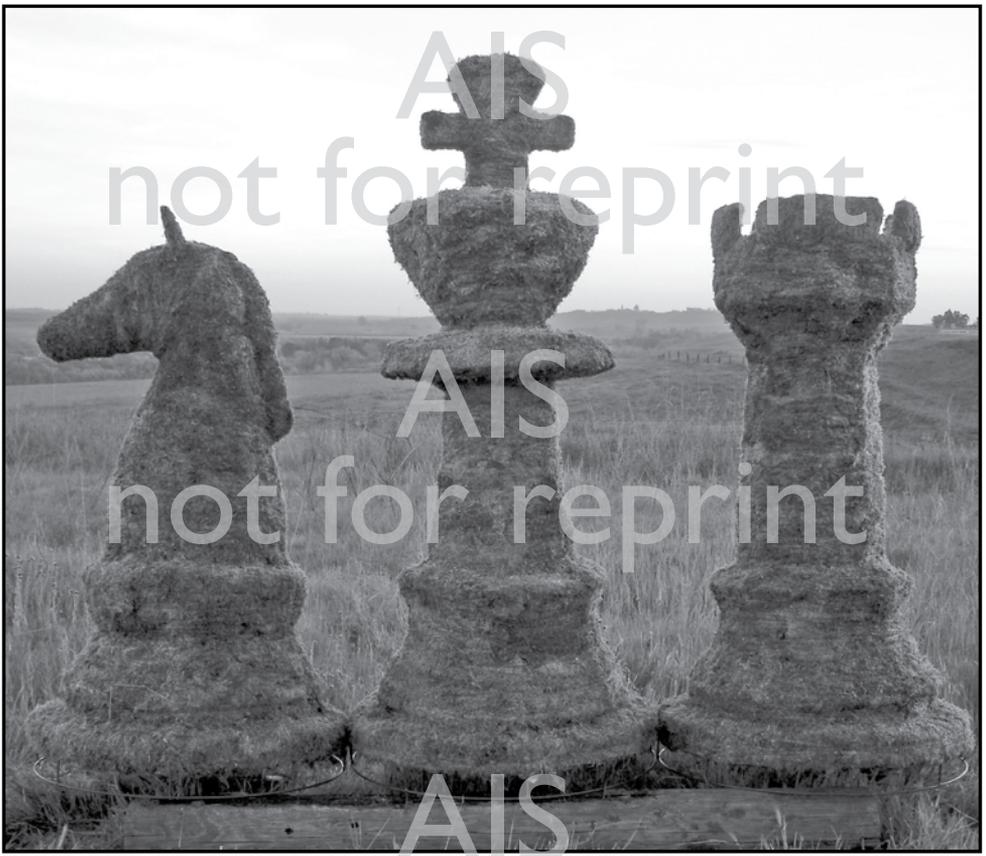
The ivy should be kept close to the frame and then trimmed with scissors. The more it is trimmed, the more the plant will be encouraged to have tighter growth, resulting in a nicer finished look.

## **FRAMES WITH MOSS STUFFING**

Stuffed moss topiary calls for a different approach. The frame must be reinforced to stand up to the added weight of wet moss and soil. We use rebar or pipe to reinforce the inner frame. Packaging "peanuts" in heavy plastic bags can take up space in the center of the frame without adding weight. The outer edges are then filled with soil and completely covered with moss. Use as many ivy cuttings or small plants as you have and hold the stems in place with hair pins. I like to use brown hair pins from the beauty supply shop because they disappear in the moss. The advantage of stuffed moss topiary is that it looks finished almost immediately.

## **HOW WE MAKE A FRAME**

When we create a frame we have several things to consider. We want a nicely proportioned topiary that is easy to recognize, easy to plant and doesn't have any really tiny parts. Sometimes we'll leave bare wire for small details, such as the whiskers on a cat. We try to put just enough wire in the frame to support the plant and serve as a guide for trimming, but not so much that it is difficult to reach inside the frame to manipulate the plant. Vines need the wire for support, but too much wire makes it difficult to hide, so there's a balance. Of course for stuffed topiary, sturdiness is really important, and extra supports are added. If we're making up a new frame, we sometimes look at cartoons or children's books to get ideas about how to make an animal or shape simple, yet still include the features that make it



This Giant Chess Set created by Cliff Finch's Topiary Zoo has been pre-stuffed with sphagnum moss and is ready to be planted. There are different ways to cover the Chess pieces. If the set is to remain portable after planted, the ivy plants could be planted directly in the moss. If the set will be permanent, the ivy could be planted in the ground at the base in the ground and trained up and over the topiary. Either way, the ivy should be pinned down close to the form to make sure good definition of the design is maintained.

Although they are very large and could handle a larger leaf ivy, it is important to remember that small to medium ivies will give greater definition to the shapes. Good ivies for this project would be: 'Shamrock', 'Ralf', 'Walthamensis', 'Midget', or 'Anita' to name a few green cultivars. For color, and to give the individual pieces a flair, 'Gold Child', 'Golden Ingot', 'Glacier', or 'Lady Frances'. There are a number of other types of plants that could also work on these moss filled figures such as an assortment of succulents.

unique. For custom designs, we ask the client for a sketch or pictures to make sure we get everything right. We're currently working on a mermaid that will appear to be swimming above a submersible in a display.

To start the frame, a profile is drawn on a steel table. Then the wire is bent to that shape and welded. That portion is welded on to a stand and legs are added to it. We then use wire circles to fill in the center to complete the topiary frame for

shrub topiary. Openings are left on one side of each of the legs to slide a narrow plant in.

Those who would like to make a frame themselves can start with a profile of the shape they want using a wire they can bend by hand. If they can't weld, then wire from the hardware store can be used to tie the portions together. Start with a simple frame that doesn't have too many tight bends and graduate to more difficult designs.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### “What is the easiest ivy to grow?”

That depends on what 'easy' means. Most people are really asking “which ivy will grow the fastest?” *H.* 'Teardrop', 'California', 'Emerald' and 'Walthemensis' – all green ivies, are fast and hardy. The tiny leafed varieties such as 'Spetchley' or 'Mini-Ester' take longer. Variegated ivy can also be slower because the blotches, spots



*H.h.* 'Rusche' (a sport of 'Tobler') adorns this swan frame. Impatiens and begonias compliment the topiary swan. Once the ivy has filled the frame, simple trimming is the basic maintenance.



This topiary was made for the Philharmonic garden tour in Fresno, California. The skirt is planted with 'Midas Touch', 'Eva' around her blouse, and 'Manda Crested' for her hair. We have used the same topiary for other occasions. Once she held a cup and saucer for a tea party, another time she was re-furbishted with work shoes and garden implements to look like a garden girl.

or edges lack the pigment to carry out photosynthesis. But the beauty of the variegateds makes up for the longer wait. For instance, 'Gold Heart' can take twice as long to grow as an all-green ivy, but what ivy sparkles like 'Gold Heart', especially at a distance?

### **“How can I keep my indoor ivy topiary alive?”**

This is where a few simple suggestions can make a big difference. Ivy likes to be evenly moist and benefits from frequent washing of the leaves to discourage pests, especially spider mites which suck the contents of the leaves leaving speckles or tiny spots which, at a glance, might make the leaves look dry. To compensate for the dryness of the plants we tend to overwater and the combination of a weakened plant from the mites and the over-watering sends the poor ivy into rapid decline. A little insecticidal soap in a spray bottle kills the mites, and a repeat application a few days later catches any new eggs that may have hatched. Unless it is too cold, I suggest taking the ivy outdoors every now and then for some fresh air and a shower from the hose. Of course, you could also just put it in the shower. A mild fertilizer once or twice a month keeps it well fed.

### **“What long term maintenance is required?”**

Every year in the fall, check the roots to see if they are root-bound or circling. Gently scratch the roots then, if necessary, trim them and the foliage. Repot in a little bigger pot or the same size with some fresh soil. I find this gives the ivy a chance to be reinvigorated and greatly rewards the effort.

### **“How does climate and exposure affect ivy topiaries?”**

Ivy prefers bright light but not direct sun. Our central California valley climate burns the leaves of ivy if they receive afternoon sun. Cooler climates will allow more sun exposure. Ivy topiaries may need protection in harsh winter climates. Mossed topiaries need more frequent watering in hot dry climates. *(Editors note: In the East and Mid-West, it is essential we bring topiaries indoors for the winter.)*

## **IF YOU NEED HELP**

Over the years Cliff and I have made an enormous variety of frames, the product of our imaginative clients, including everything from Victorian men to a life-sized wedding couple. We even made a five foot Christmas ornament to be used in place of a traditional tree. Anything can be made, so long as you start with a good frame. If you're thinking of making an ivy topiary, just start with something simple and put it in a place where you can enjoy it. I think you may find that ivy is easy to fall in love with and growing it on a topiary frame will train it into a work of art for all to enjoy.

If you have trouble with your topiaries you can contact me at [joanie@topiaryzoo.com](mailto:joanie@topiaryzoo.com), or you can go to our web page [www.topiaryzoo.com](http://www.topiaryzoo.com)

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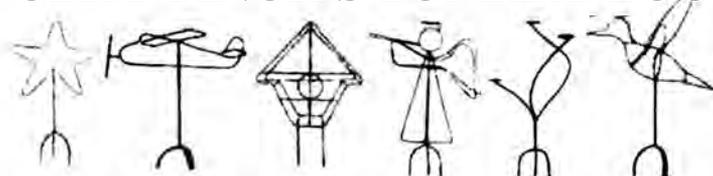
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Editors note: We asked four ladies from our Toronto Chapter to share their secrets of successful topiaries and potted ivies. All are first place prize winners.

## MY PRIDE AND JOY

By Jeanine Essaye

In the summer my ivy stays outside on a large covered porch. Twice a week I pour a large can of water absolutely all over the plant until the pot feels very heavy. At the same time, I give the pot a quarter turn. Additionally, in the heat of the summer, the plant gets sprayed every day with cold water.

In the late fall, when it is time to bring the plant indoors, I wash every leaf very carefully and spray it with End-All, a wonderful Canadian insecticide. I put the plant where it will get as much light as possible which, in my case, is in front of a large window facing north. During the winter months, when spider mites are a constant risk, my plant gets a cold shower once a week in the bathtub. There than that, I pray that those uninvited guests stay away.

In conclusion, my approach is to try to keep the plant very clean all the time. There really is no other secret but washing and spraying. It's the best way to increase your chances to keep your ivies in good condition.

## A CHALLENGE AND A JOY

By Barb. Hill

I find spraying ivies once a week in a large sink with very cold water keeps my ivies lush and free of pests.

I also spray with a mixture of liquid soap and baking soda—1 tsp of baking soda, 1 tbsb of a mild liquid soap (Ivory) in a 32 oz bottle of water. Spray all the leaves and stems thoroughly protecting the earth ball with foil or plastic. Let spray sit for one hour, then rinse with clear cold water. This is a great treatment for mites and may require several treatments 5-7 days apart if the infestations are heavy. Higher humidity and lower temperatures are both helpful.

I use a 20-20-20 fertilizer – ¼ teaspoon to a gallon of water every two weeks. Put water only on the soil. Water till it runs through the hole in the bottom of the pot and the soil is thoroughly moist. Never allow pots to stand in water. Water again when surface feels slightly dry.

In my home, I put my ivies in or near a north or east window, or in filtered or reduced light from the west. During the summer months, I put my ivies and topiaries on a covered porch. The sides are open so air circulation is ideal. The porch faces north-west.

I remove large overgrown leaves to help keep good symmetry and turn the plants every week so as to keep the growth pattern similar on all sides.

# LOTS OF CHALLENGES

By Mary Jean Potter

Home life may suit the indoor grower, but unless you're careful you will have lots of companions in the form of tiny flying creatures.

As a novice grower of ivies living in a condo, with no space for growing under lights, the good old fashioned bathroom windowsill gets the nod. Filtered morning sun so they can smile, afternoon calm so they can sleep, and evening turning so they dance, all play a part along with high humidity to enable them to flourish. Pebble trays underneath provide the humid atmosphere required.

Once a week they receive a lovely cold shower in the bathtub, using a hand-sprayer—and to my delight all creatures great and small disappear.

Styling of a topiary comes as you would with your hair—a snip here and a snip there to make them look their very best. Good healthy growth is provided by a weak solution of 20-20-20 each week.

Each night as you brush your teeth, you sigh and talk to them so they know you are watching and waiting for those lovely new shoots.

Good luck. It's a fun hobby, BUT be careful—you may end up with about 20 of these darlings that your spouse has to look after when you are away!



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# LIFE OF A WINDOWSILL TOPIARY

From Birth to Best in Show

By Barbara Furlong, President Ontario Chapter



Photo: Rachel Cobb

... And so life begins...

Set the stage for this winner with location, pot frame and ivy

## **Location:**

Unobstructed north kitchen windowsill

## **Topiary Components**

Ivy: Long Runners

Leaf size and shape in scale with frame and pot

Frame: Sturdy galvanized plastic coated wire frame with a good base for anchoring

Pot: Good drainage hole

All three components must flow as one

## **Planting Method for Open Frame Topiary**

Position ivy in pot that has good drainage material and soil mix

Place frame in position with care. Do not trap runners under frame

Plan placement of runners on frame for even coverage

Wind and/or tie runners to frame. Use fishing line to tie runners

Take care not to trap leaves between stem and frame

Take care not to tie runners too tightly to the frame

Pin extra runners around base of frame or rim of pot  
Groom, water and spray topiary

### Care

Place topiary in bright light  
Keep soil evenly moist but not wet  
Water when soil begins to dry out  
Spray with cold water several times a week  
Rotate topiary for even growth  
Fertilize with ¼ strength 20-20-20 every two weeks  
Wash and groom once a month to prevent unwanted "guests" and maintain an even leaf pattern  
Cut excess runner length. Root runners in water  
Replant as needed to maintain original shape

### Method

Make a deep hole in the soil using a pencil  
Wrap roots of cutting around stem of cutting  
Place and position rooted cutting in hole  
Top up with soil  
Water  
Position new runner as needed for topiary shape



... And so life continues  
on the windows ...

Note: My ivies do not summer outdoors because I do not want uninvited guests.

My six favorite ivies for topiary are: 'Shamrock', 'Anita', 'Needlepoint', 'Star', 'Shannon', 'Itsy Bitsy'.

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Whimsical Topiary Wedding Display  
Created by Samia Rose Topiary  
Photo: Rachel Cobb

Ivy clad Mr. McGregor in private  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA.  
Created by Samia Rose Topiary  
Photo: Rachel Cobb

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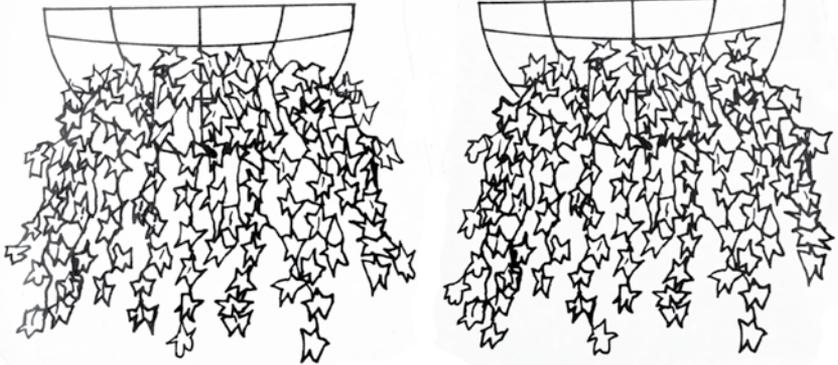
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Editors note: One of the first printed instructions for making a small topiary were given by our own President, Suzanne Warner Pierot, in the first edition of *The Ivy Book, the Growing and Care of Ivy and Ivy Topiary* (Macmillan 1974). Below is an excerpt from one of the chapters.



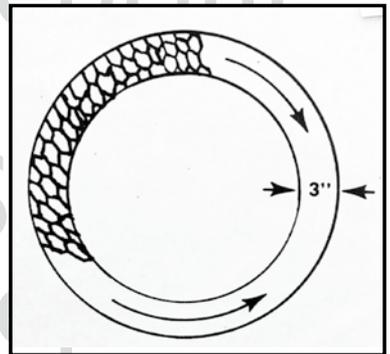
## TOPIARY – FUN AND ART

By Suzanne Warner Pierot

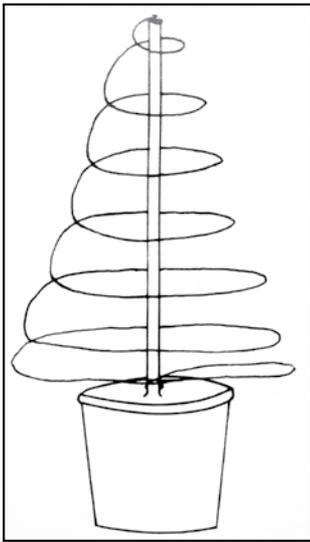
There are two ways to make a topiary. You can plant the ivy in a pot and train it up a frame that you anchor in the pot. Or you can make a hollow frame and plant the ivy in the frame. Thus the frame becomes the growing container:

In both cases the frame must be sturdy. Use the heaviest gauge of galvanized or aluminum wire you can handle. Anything lighter than number 8 wire will lack rigidity. I prefer aluminum because it is more flexible and lighter to handle than galvanized. Galvanized wire eventually rusts, aluminum does not.

**IVY RING:** For a beginner, the ivy ring is probably the easiest. Simply cut a length of aluminum or galvanized wire and anchor each end into a pot of soil. Put two plants at opposite ends of the ring and train the vines to grow up around the ring. As the vines grow, fasten them with cotton-covered wire, and soon you'll have a thick lush green ring of ivy. This makes a wonderful centerpiece. You can hang ornaments, ribbons, all kinds of small seasonal decorations around the ring to make holiday parties gayer than ever.



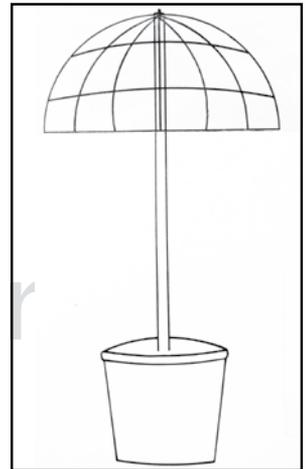
**IVY SPIRAL:** This is a beauty and not very difficult to make. Get a strong stake (the kind you use for tomato plants). Cut it to the length you want your finished topiary, keeping in mind that part of it must go to the bottom of your pot or



container. Put the stake into the soil so that it stands firmly. Hammer a nail into the top of the stake which will ultimately be used to fasten the wire. Fasten the other end of the wire to the bottom of the stake at the soil line. Then bring wire in spirals to top of the stake making it widest at the bottom and hooking it to the already prepared nail at the top of the stake. Leave enough space between spirals so that when the ivy has grown up and around there will be enough space to show a clear definition. Train the ivy to grow up the spiral to the top, fastening whenever needed with cotton-covered wire.

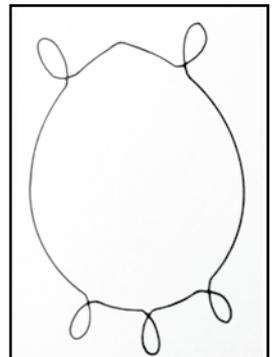
**IVY UMBRELLA:** Another inexpensive and very effective instant topiary is one that resembles an umbrella. For this you need a tomato stake and a

wire hanging-basket which you can buy inexpensively at any garden center. Wrap wires of basket with wet, coarse sphagnum moss, tying it in place with flexible wire. (Wet sphagnum is easier to handle.) Anchor the stake firmly in the soil in the middle of the pot and nail the basket, inverted, to the top. Train your ivy to grow up and around the stake and around the sphagnum-covered wires of the basket. When it gets to the top, be sure to keep the leaves well sprayed with water.



## MAKING A FRAME FOR A TOPIARY

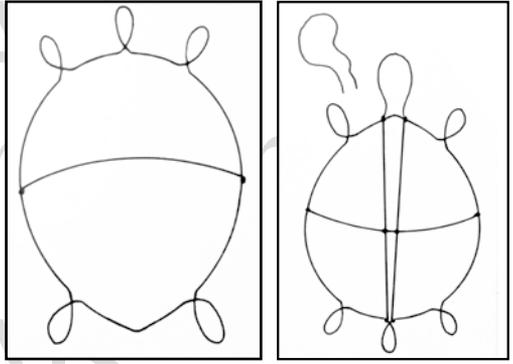
When you're ready to try making your own animal frame, I think you'll find a turtle form the easiest. Now mind you, I didn't say "easy". I said "easiest". If you can make this one, I believe you can make most of the others whether it's a beast, bird or geometric form. Once you get the hang of it, it isn't difficult. It just takes imagination and dexterity.



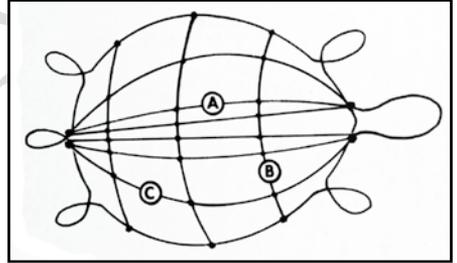
First thing you do is make a pattern out of a large piece of paper of the shape of the turtle's bottom including his four legs and tail. In other words, the shape is the imprint a turtle would leave had he been laying on sand. Be certain the form is large enough so that the shape will be easily recognized and the details apparent when it is covered with ivy. The ivy will add more to the

girth than to the length and can obscure whatever little details you might have had in mind. Remember, too, that if the form is of normal size, the finished creature will be too fat.

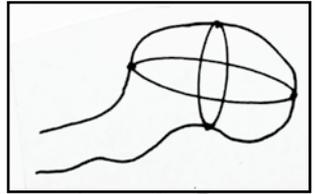
Place the wire around your pattern, making large loops for the legs and a small loop for the tail. (Head comes later.) Cut the wire with pliers. Bend ends so they can hook to each other. Now tape hooks tightly together with adhesive, electric, or bicycle tape. Cut a piece of wire long enough to go across (width) the turtle's back to form an arch.



For the head, cut a length of wire to go lengthwise from tail to head – long enough to shape neck and head and return to tail. Hook at tail and tape at all junctures.



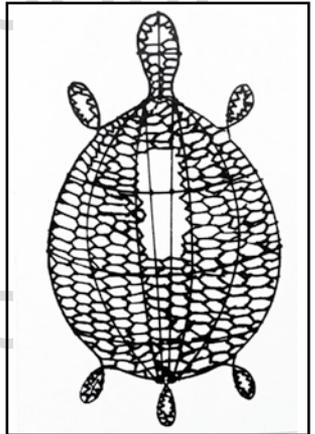
Cut two lengths of wire so that they reach from the tail to each side of the neck to form an arch. Hook the ends to the frame. Tape at all hooks and juncture points. (Step A)



Cut additional wires (two or more, depending on turtle size) to go across width of back. Hook and tape. (Step B)

Cut additional wires to go lengthwise from tail to base of neck and weave them in and out of the width-wires to give added strength to the superstructure. Hook and tape. (Step C)

Now cut a wire to arch across (width) the head and back again. Hook and tape. Cut another wire to arch across the length of head and back again. Hook and tape. You now have a superstructure for the head.



Cover the body with one large piece of chicken wire by placing your chicken wire under the body and bringing up the ends so they meet on top of the back. Squeeze chicken wire to shape. Leave the top of the back open for stuffing of the sphagnum moss.

Similarly cover each of the legs, tail and head with chicken wire, leaving an opening in each. Secure chicken wire to frame with flexible nonrust wire at juncture points.

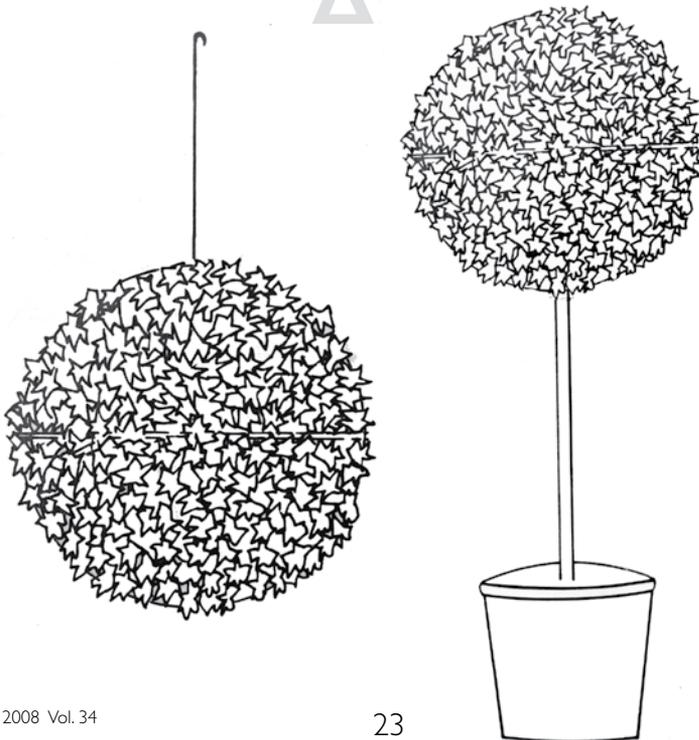
### **Sphagnum Moss**

When the form is completed to your satisfaction, take as much coarse sphagnum moss as you think you'll need to stuff inside the frame. Soak it overnight in a solution of water and soluble fertilizer, such as Peters or Miracle-Gro. Drain for several hours, or if you're in a hurry, squeeze out the excess water. Now stuff the wet moss inside the chicken wire. It will take a while, but remember the tighter you pack the moss, the easier it will be to keep it moist.

### **Planting the Rooted Cuttings**

Close the chicken wire on top of the body, head, tail, and feet as smoothly as possible by tying the ends together with flexible rust-proof wire, cutting away any excess chicken wire. The smoother the chicken wire, the better the finished configuration.

Now plant your cuttings directly into the moss and as close together as possible as the number of your cuttings will allow. Use a thick stick or pencil to firmly set in the roots. Short cuttings, about four inches long, are best. When the planting is finished, the topiary will have a scraggly appearance. To smooth it out, attach the trailing vines to the body with hairpins. The bare spots will soon fill in.



Editors note: American Ivy Society member John Thies, who lives in Eastern Pennsylvania and has been creating his own topiaries for the past 8 years. For 27 years he was an Art Director and Creative Director for a major corporation. Below he shares with us how he makes them.

## I MAKE MY OWN

By John Thies

When possible I like to make my own topiary frames. I get ideas from pets, photographs, National Geographic or even stuffed animals.

First thing I do is draw a cross section of the figure in full-scale on a whiteboard with dry-erase markers which I purchase at the local craft store. Then I outline the sketch(s) with 1/8" automotive masking tape to make them more permanent. After taping, I put the whiteboard on the floor or low bench and secure it so I can bend 9-gauge wire along the outline.

Next, I twist wire at all junction points. I also do the same with each of the small parts that will be added - such as an arm for a teddy frame, or a fin for the body of a dolphin.

The parts are assembled together by twisting the wire tightly at all cross sections. Lighter gauge wire can be used for the larger open areas. I now have a 3 dimensional shape. I attach a piece of re-bar to extend from the frame down into the container. "Super Weatherstrip" adhesive is used to hold the frame to the container. For a large frame that would be kept permanently in the ground I weight the topiary with rocks and set it in a shallow concrete block for strength.



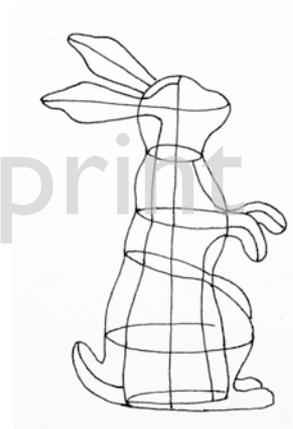
For a really large topiary frame you may need to purchase a small welder to use on the joints of the main structure - or, do, as I do and purchase a frame from Cliff Finch's Topiary Zoo.

If you live in a cold climate as I do, you will have to bring your topiary indoors for the winter and water may become a problem. Luckily, I have an attached sunroom, completely surrounded by windows

on three sides and open to the family room on the fourth side. The sunroom is tiled. I simply lay old bath towels on the floor, particularly around the large figures. This allows me to spray and water as needed and clean-up is quick and easy. I fertilize once a month indoors and out, both summer and winter.



Left:  
"Teddy" is four feet tall and was made 6 years ago.



# IVY OF THE YEAR 2009

## *Hedera helix* 'Eva'

The American Ivy Society has selected *Hedera helix* 'Eva' as the Ivy of the Year for 2009.

Some say that newer is better, but this is not always the case. 'Eva' certainly proves this with its beautiful creamy-white foliage. This variegated ivy was discovered in the early 1960's by Tage Melin of Hjallesø, Denmark, and the name was published in two German magazines *Gartenwelt* and *Zierpflanzenbau*, in 1966. Since that time, this ivy has traveled the world becoming a very popular houseplant.

'Eva' is a Variegated Bird's Foot ivy in the Pierot Classification system and has three forward-pointed lobes with the terminal lobe up to twice as long as the laterals. The variegation is a cream to white margin with a green-gray center. The leaves are arranged close on the stem. It is self-branching but light pruning produces more branching. If left to her own accord, she will make long runners.

This versatile ivy does well as a houseplant, can be used in all types of topiary and has been shown to be winter hardy up to at least zone 6 or -10 degrees (F). For the best color, 'Eva' must be grown in good sun light. In lower light levels the variegation may fade to a pale green. In the cool temperatures of winter she will also take on a pinkish hue.

The American Ivy Society started the "Ivy of the Year" program in 2001 with 'Lady Frances'; 2002 'Teardrop'; 2003 'Golden Ingot'; 2004 'Duck Foot'; 2005 'Misty'; 2006 'Anita'; 2007 'Shamrock', and 2008 'Gold Child'

For successful out door planting, remember to plant deep, removing several of the lower leaves and planting to the now lowest leaves. Ivy will root along the new stem, helping it to become established. When possible, plant variegated ivies where they will get some protection from the winter sun and wind, which causes most winter damage.

To join the American Ivy Society: \$20.00 annually brings a free plant,  
The Ivy Journal, and three Newsletters.  
(see page 37 for more membership information)

Press information or photos contact:  
Suzanne Pierot, Tel: 845-688-5318, E-mail: [Suzanne@hvi.net](mailto:Suzanne@hvi.net)

The American Ivy Society website: [www.ivy.org](http://www.ivy.org)

## 2008 NEW REGISTRATIONS I

When a new ivy is registered, it is photographed and described in detail in the *Ivy Journal*. This is done in order that a correct name is associated with each specific ivy. In addition, a herbarium specimen is made and deposited in the Willard Sherman Turrell Herbarium (MU), Department of Biology, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 454045, and in the Claude E. Phillips Herbarium (DOV), Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Delaware State University, in Dover Delaware, 19901-2277. The letter(s) used in parentheses after the cultivar's name refer(s) to the Pierot Classification System (Pierot 1974, 1995), and *Knowing and Growing Ivy* (AIS 1997,2006, 2007). The AIS number is an Identification/Verification number used by the American Ivy Society to keep track of the history of every ivy sent for identification. The first two digits are the last two digits of the year the ivy was received, and the last three digits are the sequential numbering during that year. All new cultivars are presumed sports of *Hedera helix*, unless otherwise noted.

### “MEDUSA HAD TWO CHILDREN”

*Hedera helix* ‘Chrysaor’ (O, V, F)

*Hedera helix* ‘Pegasus’ (O, F)

By Russell A. Windle, Registrar

#### BACKGROUND

Many people know who Medusa was, but I don't know how many people know the whole story. Medusa was born normal and grew into a beautiful woman. Unfortunately she had an ill fated affair with Poseidon at the altar of Athena. When Athena learned of this betrayal, she turned the beautiful Medusa into the Gorgon with snakes for hair whose face would turn any man to stone in a single glance.

Perseus was sent to retrieve Medusa's head for use as a weapon. When Medusa was beheaded, it is said that Pegasus, the winged horse, and Chrysaor, the Giant carrying a golden sword, the offspring of the affair with Poseidon, sprang forth from her severed head.

#### HISTORY

I have been growing *Hedera helix* ‘Medusa’ since 1991, and growing it outside for the last 14 years. It makes a wonderful low spreading shrub-like planting, so I am always on the look out for more plants with this type of habit. As luck would have; it, I found two such plants as sports from ‘Medusa’.

‘Chrysaor’ (AIS 06-070) Fig. 1 is an (O) Oddity, (V) Variegated, and (F) Fan ivy in the Pierot Classification System (Pierot, 1974, 1995). This ivy is being submitted for registration by Hedera etc. P.O. Box 461, Lionville, PA 19343-0641.

This ivy was found in 2004, when propagating cuttings of ‘Medusa’. A single leaf on a cutting was found to have a streak of golden color. The stem was cut just above this leaf, and when the dormant bud at the base of this leaf started to



Fig. 1 'Chrysaor' (AIS 06-070) is an (O) Oddity, (V) Variegated, and (F) Fan ivy. Photo: Russell Windle

grow, the leaves were found to be entirely speckled with gold and green splashes, much like *Hedera helix* 'Gold Dust'

## DESCRIPTION

The leaves are fan shaped with 3 to 5 forward pointed lobes. Along the margin of the leaf there may be large forward pointed teeth, giving the appearance of more lobes. There is a great deal of variation of leaf shape. The stems are fasciated, with leaves and stems coming out at all angles along the stem, giving the plant its stiff upright habit.

New growth is a bright 'Gold Dust' variegation, having irregular splotches of gold, green and gray. As leaves mature, the overall color darkens, but the variegation is still prominent. There has been some reversion to the all green 'Medusa' observed. This should be removed as the green growth could overgrow the variegated. These cuttings could be propagated as 'Medusa'.

Habit is stiff up-right growth, with branches cascading off of the main stems. Winter hardiness has not been tested.

**'Pegasus'** (AIS 06-002) Fig. 2 is an (O) Oddity, (F) Fan ivy, in the Pierot Classification system (Pierot, 1974, 1995). This ivy is being submitted for registration by Hedera etc., P.O. Box 461, Lionville, PA 19353-0461.

This ivy was found on an out-door planting of *Hedera helix* 'Medusa' in December of 2004. Leaves are fan shaped with 5 to 7 forward pointed lobes each lobe having 3 to 5 large teeth, giving the over all appearance of 15-20 lobes, radiating out from the base of the leaf.

As the new leaves emerge, they are very pubescent; giving them a silvery-gray appearance. As the leaves expand, the pubescence becomes less apparent. The pubescence—and the many forward pointed teeth—give a feathery appearance to the leaves.

Stems are highly fasciated, with leaves and stems radiating out at all angles from the main stem. With fasciated ivies, you will occasionally find plantlets growing from the base of the leaf where the petiole joins the leaf. Fig 3. These plantlets can be propagated on their own.

'Pegasus' has an upright spreading habit, making a nice low growing panting. Most fasciated ivies do not tend to climb, as the adventitious roots do not seem to form along the stem as happens on normal ivies.

Winter hardiness has not been tested, but since this sport was found growing outside on a very hardy ivy, it would probably have some of this hardiness.

## **SIMILAR CULTIVARS**

Since these are both fasciated ivies, they could be grouped with other fasciated ivies such as *Hedera helix* 'Medusa', and 'Ellen Meakin'. Their over all habit and growth pattern are very similar: the leaf shape and variegation pattern would be the only differences.

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Sulgrove, Sabina Mueller August 1985, Vol. 11(2): 32 (text in caption); photo p.32; lit. p. 34, Winter hardiness in Dayton Ohio and Vicinity 1984-1985

Sulgrove, Sabina Mueller; Windle Russell A. Fall 1998 Vol. 24: 42, 43; no photos; no lit. Up-coming New Registrations



Above: Fig. 2 'Pegasus'  
(AIS 06-002) Fig. 2 is an (O)  
Oddity, (F) Fan ivy.



Left: Fig. 3 Stems are highly  
fasciated with leaves and  
stems radiating out at all  
angles from the main stem.  
With fasciated ivies, you will  
occasionally find plantlets  
growing from the base of the  
petiole where the petiole joins  
the leaf.

Both photos: Russell Windle

## 2 NEW IVIES FROM ACROSS THE POND: *Hedera helix* 'Clotted Cream' & 'Funny Girl'

By Russell A. Windle, Registrar

### HISTORY

Fibrex Nurseries LTD, Honeybourne Road, Pebworth, Near Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 8XP, UK is a family run Nursery, established by Hazel and Richard Key some 50 years ago. The nursery is now in the capable hands of their son, Richard, and daughters, Ursula and Angela. Fibrex Nurseries offers a wide selection of Hardy Ferns, Hedera, Hellebore and Pelargonium. Web site: [www.fibrex.co.uk](http://www.fibrex.co.uk). Unfortunately, they do not ship over seas. For sources for these ivies, contact the American Ivy Society.

Over the years, the Ivy Research Center and Fibrex Nurseries have exchanged ivies for identification and introduction. These two ivies are being submitted for registration by Angela Tandy, Fibrex Nurseries, LTD

### DESCRIPTIONS

'**Clotted Cream**' (AIS 06-053) is a (V) variegated (C) Curly ivy in the Pierot Classification system (Pierot 1974, 1995). This ivy was received in October of 2006. Fibrex Nurseries has had this ivy since 1986 but only recently had enough stock to offer it for sale.

There has been much confusion with this cultivar name as some sources claim it to be the same as *Hedera helix* 'Caecilia'. And, at a quick glance, it is possible to confuse this ivy with Caecilia, but with careful examination—especially over time—you will see the many differences in them, so I am accepting the name 'Clotted Cream' for the registration of this ivy.

Leaves are medium sized, about as long as wide, with 5 rounded lobes and an overlapping cordate base. The terminal lobe is about twice as long as the laterals. The margin of leaf is highly undulated especially in the sinuses. The margin also has excrescence, or extra tissue, which takes on a reddish color, especially in cooler weather, with some of this excrescence actually becoming small leaflets coming off the edge of the leaf. Fig. 1

Variegation is a white irregular margin; with a green to gray-green center. Veins light green; and slightly raised above surface of leaf. Plant is somewhat self-branching, making long runners. Branching is increased by light pruning.



Fig. 1 'Clotted Cream' (AIS 06-053) is a (V) variegated (C) Curly ivy. Leaves medium sized, about as long as wide, with 5 rounded lobes and an overlapping cordate base. The terminal lobe is about twice as long as the laterals. The margin of leaf is highly undulated especially in the sinuses. The margin also has excrescence, or extra tissue, which takes on a reddish color, especially in cooler weather; with some of this excrescence actually becoming small leaflets coming off the edge of the leaf. Photo: Russell Windle

### **SIMILAR CULTIVARS**

The most visible difference between 'Clotted Cream' and 'Caecilia' is the excrescences, or excess leaf tissue along the margin of the leaf. On some of the leaves, this excrescence actually becomes small leaflets.

The overall size is different, with 'Clotted Cream' being somewhat larger than 'Caecilia'. The curliness to the margin of the leaf is also more pronounced in 'Clotted Cream'.

**'Funny Girl'** (AIS 06-050) Fig. 3 is a (V) Variegated (H) Heart shaped ivy in the Pierot Classification system (Pierot 1974, 1995). This ivy was received in October of 2006.

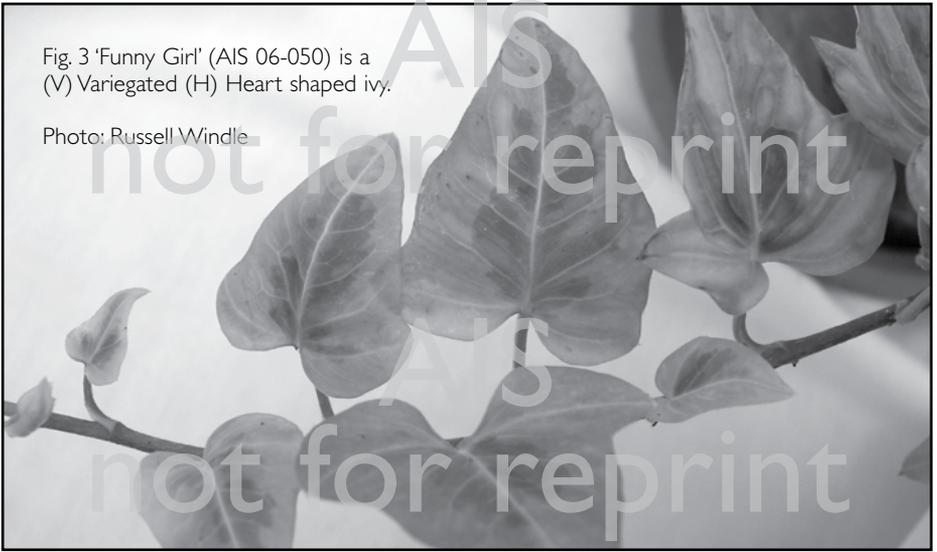
This ivy was found in 2002 as a sport of *Hedera helix* 'Urusla', one of the variegated 'Shamrock' ivies, by Eileen Osborn of Elm Close, Pebworth, Nr. Stratford Upon Avon, Warks, UK, and has been offered by Fibrex since 2004.

### **DESCRIPTION**

Leaves are slightly longer than wide, heart shaped to three lobed with a cordate base. Lobing is more pronounced during rapid growth in spring. Stems are stiff and

Fig. 3 'Funny Girl' (AIS 06-050) is a (V) Variegated (H) Heart shaped ivy.

Photo: Russell Windle



plants are slow growers. The leaf shape is probably the result of some fasciation in the stem or petiole. This would also explain the stiffness of the stems.

Variegation: leaves are bright chartreuse green with an irregular darker green splash through the center following the main veins. Veins are raised and light green. Color darkens with age and becomes green speckled with yellow flecks between veins.

### SIMILAR CULTIVARS

'Funny Girl' has the leaf shape and habit of *Hedera helix* 'Teardrop', but with the variegation pattern of *Hedera helix* 'Ursula' Fig. 4 at right.

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## 2008 NEW REGISTRATION III

# *Hedera helix* 'Fandango' (C.F)

By Russell A. Windle, Registrar

### HISTORY

'Fandango' (AIS 05-031) Fig. 1 is a (C) Curly, (F) Fan ivy in the Pierot Classification system (Pierot, 1974-1995). This ivy is being submitted for registration by Hedera etc., P.O. Box 461, Lionville, PA 19353-0641.

This ivy was found as a mutation from *Hedera helix* 'Filigran' in 2004. It has been grown since that time to build up stock and to check for stability of the cultivar. After proving its worth, a name had to be found. "Fandango: An animated Spanish dance in triple time". That fits this lively ivy.



Fig. 1 'Fandango' (AIS 05-031) is a (C) Curly, (F) Fan ivy,

### DESCRIPTION

Leaves shiny dark blackish green, fan-shaped with a wedge shaped base. Major veins appear depressed, with minor veins slightly raised. Five to seven forward pointed lobes. The terminal lobe is twice as long as the lateral lobes with the basal lobes being mere protrusions. There is an upward curl in each of the sinuses giving the curliness to the leaf. The petioles are as long as the leaves and the stems have a reddish tint.

Plants are very self-branching, making mounds of growth. If left to grow, it will produce long runners.

## SIMILAR CULTIVARS

The two closest cultivars to 'Fandango' would be 'Green Ripple', and 'Manda Fringette'. Fig 2 'Manda Fringette' is overall, twice the size of 'Fandango' and not as self-branching. 'Green Ripple' has a similar leaf shape but the base of the leaf is broader and it does not have the dark green color or shininess of 'Fandango'.



Fig 2 Left to right *H.h.*'Manda Fringette', *H.h.*'Fandango', and *H.h.*'Green Ripple'

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## 2008 NEW REGISTRATION IV

# *Hedera helix* 'Pinwheel' (v,c)

By Russell A. Windle, Registrar



### HISTORY

'Pinwheel' (AIS 006-069 ) Fig. 1 (left) is a (V) Variegated, (C) Curly ivy in the Pierot Classification system (Pierot, 1974-1995). This ivy is being submitted for registration by Hedera etc., P.O. Box 461, Lionville, PA 19353-0641.

This ivy was found in 2004 as a mutation from *Hedera helix* 'Kaleidoscope'. Over the years, I have selected a number of mutations from Kaleidoscope. *Hedera helix* 'Beryl's Honor', registered in 2005, is another of these selections.

### DESCRIPTION

Leaves predominately five lobed with a cordate base but what make this ivy unique is that the leaf is pinched in the center; causing the lobes of the leaf to curl much like the vanes of a Pinwheel. On some of the leaves, the lobes are split to the petiole dividing the leaf into three leaflets.

The variegation is variable with some leaves appearing white with green splashes and specks to leaves green with white splashes and specks. The variegation is most pronounced on the new growth with the leaves becoming greener with age.

Leaves arranged closely along pink stems and petioles. This ivy is very self-branching but will produce long runners.

### SIMILAR CULTIVARS

There is no variegated ivy with this leaf shape but ivies such as 'Fleur de lis', 'Shamrock' and 'Shannon' will sometimes have the leaf pinched—or the leaf blade split—to make the separate leaflets found in this ivy.

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