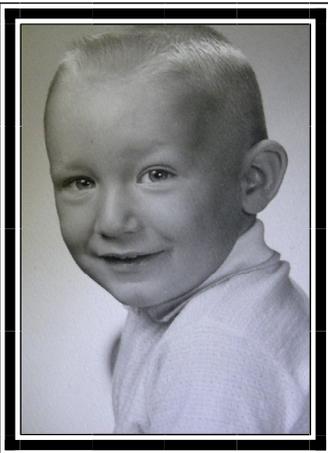Robinson Nursery Inc.

August 2008

Ulmus 'Frontier'

Ulmus amer. 'Valley Forge'

Rick Turns 50

Like most Fearless Leaders turning 50, ours was once in the first grade. Or was it twice?

Elms   Elms   Elms

"Which one is best?" I have been asked that question many times and have found no better answer than that of Jerry Fultz of Acorn Farms. His favorite Elm is the "one on the truck headed out the door!"

After a decade of consideration, I have come to the conclusion that elms are very regional growers. What grows well in one region doesn't always do well in another. One example is U. Accolade, which has poor, gnarled branching in the South, and is quite acceptable in the upper Midwest.

So the answer to the Elm question is "Where do you grow it? and, Where do you want to sell it?" Based on my travels and grower responses, here is a breakdown of what people think:

Allee: Originally from Georgia, this is an absolutely great lacebark Elm for the south, the zone 6-9 market. We see it extensively in southern Ohio. The tree has split in northern regions of zone 5.

Bosque: Another Georgia Lacebark Elm, it has held up fairly well in Ohio, but that is as far North as I have seen it grow.

Frontier: By far the best fall coloring Elm with reminiscence of Frax. Autumn Purple coloration. Fall color , Beetle resistance and good branching structure; good selling points of this tough tree.

Princeton: Our favorite, a true American Elm with large green leaves and a good growth habit. This fast growing tree is great for parks, lawns and even as a street tree where size is not an issue.

New Horizon: This Elm is a complicated hybrid of several elms and has an attractive form. This is one of the best Elms for the northern market, having zone 4 hardiness.

Valley Forge: Another true American Elm, with a more vase shape from an early age. This cultivar is difficult to keep a central leader in, but may well be worth the extra pruning time as a mature tree is awe inspiring.

David Listerman

Ulmus amer. 'Princeton'