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Dirr

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(54) ***DISTYLIUM* PLANT NAMED ‘DISMD-26-18’**

(50) Latin Name: ***Distylium* sp. hybrid**
Varietal Denomination: **‘DISmd-26-18’**

(71) Applicant: **University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc.**, Athens, GA (US)

(72) Inventor: **Matthew A. Dirr**, Watkinsville, GA (US)

(73) Assignee: **University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc.**, Athens, GA (US)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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Primary Examiner — Keith O. Robinson
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Thomas Horstemeyer, LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Distylium* plant named ‘DISmd-26-18’, characterized by its compact, freely branching, mounded, and evergreen plant habit, and its ovate-lanceolate shaped leaves, that are dark green once mature and soft pink in color when newly emerging. The inventor believes it could be used as a landscaping hedge and substitute for boxwood.

2 Drawing Sheets

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Botanical designation: *Distylium* sp. hybrid.
Variety denomination: ‘DISmd-26-18’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Distylium* plant, botanically known as *Distylium* sp. hybrid (*Distylium myricoides* x *Distylium racemosum*), a member of the Hamamelidaceae, and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name ‘DISmd-26-18’. This cultivar represents a new *Distylium*, an evergreen shrub grown for landscape use.

The new *Distylium* ‘DISmd-26-18’ was discovered and selected from a breeding program conducted by the inventor at a horticulture farm in Watkinsville, Ga. ‘DISmd-26-18’ originated as a seedling that arose from a group of seedlings from the open pollination of the female parent *Distylium* ‘PIIDIST-II’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 24,409) in the fall of 2016. ‘DISmd-26-18’ was selected as a single unique plant in the summer of 2017 from among the resulting seedlings.

Asexual propagation of the new cultivar by semi-hard stem cuttings has been continued in Watkinsville, Ga. since 2018. Observations of the resulting *Distylium* ‘DISmd-26-18’ has determined that the unique features of this new cultivar are stable and reproduced true-to-type in successive generations of such asexual propagation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Plants of the new *Distylium* cultivar ‘DISmd-26-18’ have not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment and cultural practices such as light, temperature, soil and rainfall without, however, any variance in genotype.

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The following traits have been repeatedly observed and represent the unique and distinguishing characteristics of the cultivar named ‘DISmd-26-18’. In combination, these traits set ‘DISmd-26-18’ apart from all other existing varieties of *Distylium* known to the inventors:

1. ‘DISmd-26-18’ exhibits a compact, freely-branched, mounded, and evergreen growth habit;
2. ‘DISmd-26-18’ exhibits very small ovate-lanceolate leaves that are smaller in size than the leaves of the female parent ‘PIIDIST-II’ and related cultivars ‘DISmd-09-15’ (patent pending, application Ser. No.: 17/726,883) and ‘DISmd-24-18’ (patent pending, application Ser. No.: 17/752,019);
3. ‘DISmd-26-18’ exhibits soft pink new growth foliage that matures to dark green foliage; and
4. ‘DISmd-26-18’ has thus far exhibited cold hardiness to about 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Plants of ‘DISmd-26-18’ differ from its female parent plant, ‘PIIDIST-II’ by having a less spreading canopy or growth habit and smaller leaves. ‘DISmd-26-18’ also differs from ‘PIIDIST-II’ in having new growth that is a soft pink, maturing to dark green, in contrast to the new growth of ‘PIIDIST-II’, which is a blue-purple color. The soft pink color of the new growth of ‘DISmd-26-18’ also differs from the new growth color of related cultivars ‘DISmd-09-15’, which is bronze-red, and ‘DISmd-24-18’, which is bronze-pink. In addition, as compared to related cultivars ‘DISmd-09-15’ and ‘DISmd-24-18’ and any *Distylium* thus far observed by the inventor, the leaves of ‘DISmd-26-18’ are significantly smaller.

Due to the small leaf size, the new ‘DISmd-26-18’ could thus be used and sold as a substitute for boxwood. This combined with the growth habit lends this plant to being utilized as a screening plant by landscapers and gardeners alike.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying color photographs illustrate the overall appearance and distinct characteristics of the new cultivar

'DISmd-26-18', including foliage characteristics, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description, which accurately describes the colors of 'DISmd-26-18'.

The photograph labeled FIG. 1 depicts a 'DISmd-26-18' plant with no damage grown at the horticultural farm in Watkinsville, Ga. The photograph shows the dark green mature leaves and the soft pink newer growth. Plants are three years old, and the photo was taken in August 2021.

The photograph labeled FIG. 2 depicts a close up of the foliage of 'DISmd-26-18' on a three-year-old plant. The photo shows the dark green mature leaves of 'DISmd-26-18' as well as the soft pink new growth. The photo was taken in August 2021 in Watkinsville, Ga.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following traits have been consistently observed in the original plant of this new variety and in asexually propagated progeny grown from Watkinsville, Ga., and, to the best knowledge of the inventors, their combination forms the unique characteristics of the new variety 'DISmd-26-18'.

Throughout this specification, color names beginning with a small letter signify that the name of that color, as used in common speech, is aptly descriptive. Color names beginning with a capital letter designate values based upon The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Wheel, 2015 Edition, except when general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

The aforementioned photographs and following observations, measurements, and values describe plants of the Genus species cultivar named 'DISmd-26-18'. Plants used for the description were approximately two years old and were grown in three-gallon containers under outdoor conditions in Watkinsville, Ga. The average low temperatures during the winter ranged from about 33-42° F., and the average high temperatures during the Summer ranged from about 85-92° F. in summer.

Botanical classification: *Distylium* sp. hybrid, cultivar 'DISmd-26-18'.

Parentage: *Distylium* sp. hybrid. (Female or seed parent: 'PIIDIST-II' *Distylium*. Male or pollen parent: unknown/open pollinated).

Propagation: Stem cuttings, asexual propagation.

Time to initiate roots in summer: About 3 to 4 weeks at about 32° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant: About 4 months at about 32° C.

Plant description: Medium form, well branched, diffuse and extensive.

Usage.—Landscaping hedge appropriate for commercial use, home garden, and the like.

Root description.—Medium, well branched.

Plant size.—The original plant, at about 2.5 years old in the ground, is about 45 cm high from the soil level to the top of the foliage canopy and about 88 cm wide.

First year stems.—Having a diameter of about 1.5 mm. Shape: Round. Fine pubescence. Few small lenticles about 1 mm in diameter and N199B in color.

Length.—About 20 cm and very flexible.

First year stem color.—146A.

Second year and older stems.—Have a diameter of about 3 mm or more. Shape: Round. Length: about 63 cm and stems easily broken once mature. Smooth, no pubescence.

Second year and older stem color.—N200A.

Stem strength.—Flexible when young, less flexible when mature.

Internode length.—About 1.2 cm.

Trunk diameter.—About 5 cm at soil level.

Trunk color.—199B.

Bark.—Does not exfoliate, covered with many lenticles about 1 mm in diameter and N199B in color.

Vegetative bud description:

Arrangement.—Alternate.

Shape.—Ovate with fused, pubescent bud scales.

Size.—About 1 mm in length and about 0.5 mm in width.

Color.—200A.

Foliage description:

Arrangement.—Alternate, simple.

Length.—About 2 cm.

Width.—About 6 mm.

Shape.—Ovate-lanceolate.

Apex.—Acute.

Base.—Cuneate.

Margin.—Entire, occasionally undulating.

Texture (upper and lower surfaces).—Smooth and thick, leathery.

Venation pattern.—Pinnate.

Venation color (upper and lower surfaces).—Midrib color is 147B and secondary vein color is 147A.

Color of emerging foliage (upper surface).—73B.

Color of emerging foliage (lower surface).—73B.

Color of mature foliage (upper surface).—139A.

Color of mature foliage (lower surface).—146B.

Petiole length.—About 2 mm.

Petiole diameter.—About 0.5 mm.

Petiole shape.—Elliptical.

Pubescence.—Fine, 199A in color.

Petiole color (upper and lower surfaces).—140C.

Flower description: Detailed botanical data for the flowers of the new *Distylium* are not readily available. The original plant is 2.5 years of age and has yet to flower. *Distylium* typically flower in January and are more often than not affected by late frost or cold snaps.

Fruit description: The original plant in 2.5 years of age has yet to bear fruit as it has not flowered. Thus, detailed botanical data for fruit is also not readily available for the new *Distylium* 'DISmd-26-18'.

Disease/pest resistance: Plants of the new *Distylium* grown in the nursery and garden have not been noted to be susceptible to pathogens, pests, or disease.

Weather and temperature tolerance: 'DISmd-26-18' is cold hardy in USDA Cold Hardiness Zones 7-9.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Distylium* plant named 'DISmd-26-18' as illustrated and described herein.

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FIG. 1



FIG. 2