

Dakota Goldcharm™ Spirea

A New Dwarf Spirea for Prairie Landscapes

A.A. Boe, Barbara Drugan and Dale E. Herman

The Department of Horticulture and Forestry announces the release of a new dwarf golden spirea for use in landscapes in the upper midwest. *Spirea japonica* 'Mertyann' Dakota Goldcharm™ was selected from a population of open pollinated seedlings grown from seed collected from a plant of *Spirea japonica* 'Little Princess' growing in the spirea collection at the Horticulture Research Farm near Absaraka. The seedlings were grown in the greenhouse and transplanted to the field in 1987. Considerable variability for plant size, flower color and leaf morphology occurred among the seedlings. Two of the seedlings produced gold leaves.

Spirea japonica contains some of the most dwarf varieties of spirea available for use in landscaping. It is of marginal hardiness and will be injured during extremely cold winters. Usually this injury is limited to the above the ground portion of the plant and it is able to regenerate a new crown quite quickly. Selection of new cultivars has been for more compact plants, improved flower color and gold foliage.

Dakota Goldcharm™ spirea is a gold leaved variety that is very dwarf. It appears to be hardy and has had minimal dieback through four winters. Dakota Goldcharm™ spirea is a compact shrub that will mature at 12 to 15 inches in height and may have a spread of 2 to 3 feet. Its leaves are small, ¾ to 1¼ inches, and are finely serrated. The new leaves are light bronze and change to a bright yellow gold as they mature. The gold color is retained well during the summer. No leaf browning has occurred. The flowers of Dakota Goldcharm™ spirea are a bright pink. The small flowers are produced in clusters 2-3 inches across. Profuse flowering occurs in early summer followed by scattered flowers until freeze up. The leaves retain their golden green color in the fall.

Dakota Goldcharm™ spirea will be released to the nursery trade under a propagation agreement. The name will be trademark protected. For further information, please contact the senior author at the Department of Horticulture and Forestry.



Dakota Goldcharm™ spirea – four year old plant.



Flower and leaf detail of Dakota Goldcharm™ spirea.

Boe is professor and chairman, Drugan is research technician and Herman is professor, Department of Horticulture and Forestry.