Acer platanoides "Crimson King" vs. "Fassen's Black"

In the May 4, 1956 issue of ARNOLDIA, a statement was made to the general effect that the Norway Maple variety "Crimson King" and Fassen's Black" were so similar that there was not the need for growing them both in America, implying that since the former was well established in the trade and had been widely advertised and accepted generally as a good tree, that there was no need of growing the newer more recently introduced (but not patented) "Fassen's Black." The statement concerning the similarity of these two varieties was based on my own observations of plants sent me by the man who holds the patent on "Crimson King" so that I would have expected that the stock he sent us of "Fassen's Black" was definitely true to name. These plants were grown in our own nursery and observed over a period of several years.

However, observations based on only half a dozen plants can be wrong, and apparently were in this case, for several nurserymen who have grown large blocks of both varieties, have written that there very definitely is a difference between these two varieties.

In their opinion, "Fassen's Black" maple does not keep its red foliage color throughout the summer as does the "Crimson King" maple. Rather, the color of the leaves of "Fassen's Black" takes on a greenish cast in late summer. Also, "Fassen's Black" does not grow as rapidly in caliper and in size as does "Crimson King," and the leaves are smaller as well. One nurseryman even goes so far as to report that "Fassen's Black" is more prone to attacks from the maple leaf hopper. These men, who have grown large numbers of both varieties, certainly should be qualified to report on these differences.

All of which adds up to the fact that *Acer platanoides* "Crimson King" is an excellent ornamental maple, keeping its color throughout the growing season. *Acer platanoides* "Fassen's Black" is not identical and can be considered ornamentally inferior, hence might well be dropped from further commercial propagation as just another inferior variety.

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