The elm improvement program at The Morton Arboretum was initiated to address the need for an alternative to the American elm which was suffering significant losses at the time due to Dutch elm disease. Hundreds of open-pollinated seedlings were examined and evaluated for Dutch elm disease-resistance, production ease, hardiness, and landscape performance in the Midwestern U.S. Two seedlings – Accolade™ and Danada Charm™ elms – were the first selected not only for their disease-resistance but for their American elm-like vase habits and other worthy attributes. Controlled crosses then led to the development of the Vanguard™ elm with its rapid growth, upright habit, and superior heat, cold and drought tolerance; Triumph™ elm with its glossy dark green foliage and upright-rounded habit; and Commendation™ elm which is a fast-growing and robust tree with an oval habit and yellow fall color. All of these selections have proven to be worthy landscape trees in Zones 4-8 in the Midwestern U.S. and comparable regions elsewhere.

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**Accolade™ elm**  
*Ulmus davidiana var. japonica* ‘Morton’

The Accolade™ elm was selected for its vase-shaped habit with upright arching stems reminiscent of the American elm, (*U. americana*). Accolade™ elm has proven to be a robust and vigorous grower, and is also valued for its fine-textured, dark-green glossy foliage, and yellow fall color. This selection has very good resistance to Dutch elm disease and elm yellows, and is also highly resistant to elm leaf beetle. Accolade™ elm is a chance seedling selection from The Morton Arboretum collections. Both Accolade™ and Danada Charm™ elms resulted from open-pollinated seed collected at the Arnold Arboretum from *Ulmus davidiana var. japonica*. Society of Municipal Arborists 2012 Urban Tree of the Year.

Mature size: 50 – 70’ H, 40 – 50’.

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**Commendation™ elm**  
*Ulmus* ‘Morton Stalwart’

Commendation™ elm was selected for its rapid growth, robust size, cold tolerance, broad adaptability, and excellent resistance to Dutch elm disease. This tree with its symmetrical arching branches develops an attractive upright to oval habit over time. The large, dark green leaves turn yellow in autumn. It is moderately susceptible to insect problems, notably elm leaf beetle, Japanese beetle, and gypsy moth. Resulting from a controlled cross conducted by Dr. George Ware at The Morton Arboretum using Accolade™ elm (*U. davidiana var. japonica*) as the female parent and a hybrid elm (*U. pumila* × *U. minor*) wild-collected in Russia as the male parent.

Mature size: 50 – 60’ H, 40 – 50’ W.
Danada Charm™ elm  
*Ulmus ‘Morton Red Tip’*

In a search for new trees that would provide an alternative to the devastated American elm, Danada Charm™ elm stood out from hundreds of open-pollinated seedlings of *U. davidiana* var. *japonica* that also included the Accolade™ elm. Danada Charm™ is a fast grower, even for an elm, and matures from a rounded habit in its youth to a large but elegant vase-shaped tree reminiscent of the American elm. The glossy, red-tinged spring foliage is dark green in summer transitioning to golden yellow in the fall. It has exhibited excellent resistance to Dutch elm disease and elm yellows, but is moderately susceptible to Japanese beetles and elm leaf beetle. The name Danada is derived from the Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Foundation that through its generous funding was instrumental in the development, propagation, and production of this selection.

Mature size: 60 – 70’ H, 50 – 60’ W.

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Triumph™ elm  
*Ulmus ‘Morton Glossy’*

The Triumph™ elm with its strong, upright branching is easier to train and with its deep green, highly glossy foliage is more attractive as a young tree compared to other elms. The foliage turns yellow in the fall. At a young age, this selection exhibits an upright-oval form, becoming more vase-shaped with age. Triumph™ elm has excellent disease resistance, and moderate insect resistance to elm leaf beetle and Japanese beetle. Triumph™ elm was developed through a controlled cross conducted by Dr. George Ware at The Morton Arboretum using Accolade™ elm (*U. davidiana* var. *japonica*) as the female parent and Vanguard™ elm (*U. pumila* × *davidiana* var. *japonica*) as the male parent.

Mature size: 50 – 60’ H, 40 – 50’ W
**Vanguard™ elm**  
*Ulmus ‘Morton Plainsman’*  
*Ulmus (pumila × davidiana var. japonica)*

The Vanguard™ elm with its superior heat and cold tolerance and drought resistance was selected for use in tough regions of the country where few trees grow, let alone thrive, such as in the Great Plains. Vanguard™ elm is a vigorous grower, with rampant growth that may need some corrective pruning. A rounded habit in its youth becomes somewhat more vase-shaped over time. Attractive dark green foliage all summer turns yellow in autumn. Resistant to Dutch elm disease and elm yellows, but susceptible to the typical insects on elms (Elm Leaf Beetle, Japanese Beetle and leafminer).

Mature size: 45 – 50’ H, 40 – 50’ W

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**Family**  
Ulmaceae (elm family)

**Origin**  
All five selections were developed at The Morton Arboretum. Two selections were chance seedlings, and three selections were bred by Dr. George Ware through controlled crosses. Elm taxa represented by these cultivars include *Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*, *U. minor*, and *U. pumila*.

**Hardiness**  
Triumph™ elm is cold-hardy to USDA Zones 4 – 9. Commendation™ and Danada Charm™ elms are cold-hardy to USDA Zones 4(5) – 9. Accolade™ elm is cold-hardy to USDA Zones 5 – 8. Vanguard™ elm is hardy to USDA Zones 5 – 7.

**Growth Rate**  
All of these elms can grow upwards of 3’ or more as young specimens, and 1 – 1.5’ per year through maturity. Vanguard™, Commendation™, and Accolade™ elms are the more vigorous growers, depending on the cultural conditions.

**Culture**  
Easily transplanted as balled and burlapped trees. Quick to establish and regain rapid growth. Adaptable to most soil types unless excessively moist. For full sun and good air circulation. Generally tolerant of urban conditions.

**Pest and Disease Problems**  
All selections exhibit excellent resistance to Dutch elm disease and elm yellows. Triumph™ and Accolade™ elms also exhibit good resistance to elm leaf beetle. The other selections exhibit moderate to fair resistance to the various insects that can beset elms in general (elm leaf beetle, Japanese beetle, leafminer).

**Landscape Value**  
All selections are excellent choices for use as shade trees for home and commercial landscapes, as park or street trees, or in other large landscapes where their excellent growth rates, upright habits, and urban tolerances can be appreciated.

**Propagation**  
All selections can be grafted onto *Ulmus pumila*. Accolade™ and Triumph™ elms can be reproduced through tissue culture. Triumph™ and Commendation™ elms can be propagated via softwood cuttings.

Chicagoland Grows® is a nonprofit corporation of the Chicago Botanic Garden, the Morton Arboretum, and the Ornamental Growers Association of Northern Illinois (OGA).

The Chicagoland Grows® Plant Introduction Program is dedicated to the evaluation, selection, production, and marketing of recommended and new plant cultivars. Plants selected for the program have proven to be adaptable to the Midwest and are made available to the commercial and retail landscape industry through an international network of growers and propagators.

For more information about Chicagoland Grows®, contact the Plant Introduction Department, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022, (847) 835-8301, or visit chicagolandgrows.org.

Cover photo: Accolade™ elm  
*Ulmus davidiana var. japonica* ‘Morton’