Hollies For New Jersey

Fact Sheet FS1151

Cooperative Extension

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Hollies (Ilex species) are easy-to-grow shrubs in New Jersey landscapes. They may be selected for their evergreen leaves, berries, size or shape. Cultivars of our native hollies are readily available.

Which Holly Should I Purchase?

There is a holly to suit every site. First determine your needs: specimen, accent, foundation, hedge, screen, espalier, berries, Christmas greens, wet or dry soil, deer resistance, texture, slow or rapid growth, sun or shade, evergreen or deciduous, tall or low growing. There about 10 holly species available in the nursery trade, many hybrids, and over 1000 cultivars. Dr. Elwin Orton developed many of the best holly cultivars at Rutgers including *I. opaca* 'Jersey Delight', 'Jersey Knight' and 'Jersey Princess'; *I. verticillata x serrata* hybrids ' Autumn Glow', 'Harvest Red' and 'Raritan Chief', *I. crenata* 'Beehive' and 'Jersey Pinnacle' and 'Red Beauty' (an *I. aquifolium and rugosa* hybrid).

Native New Jersey hollies		Hollies with Least Problems	
I. opaca (American holly)	*I. decidua* (possumhaw)	*I cornuta* (Chinese holly)	*I. verticillata* (winterberry)
I. verticillata (winterberry)	*I. glabra* (inkberry)	*I. vomitoria* (yaupon)	
Most Deer Resistant		**Best for Cold Areas**	
I. opaca (American holly)	*I. cornuta* (Chinese holly)	I. pendunculosa (long-stalked)	*I. verticillata* (winterberry)
I. glabra (inkberry)		I. x meserveae (Blue hollies)	
Best for Wet Sites		**Suitable for Pruned Hedges**	
I. decidua (possumhaw)	*I. glabra* (inkberry)	*I. cornuta* (Chinese holly)	*I. crenata* (Japanese holly)
I. verticillata (winterberry)	*I. vomitoria* (yaupon)	*I. glabra* (inkberry)	*I. x meserveae* (Blue hollies)
Potentially Invasive Hollies		**Specimen Plants**	
I. crenata (Japanese holly)	*I. aquifolium* (English holly)	*I. aquifolium* (English holly)	*I. cornuta* (Chinese holly)
		I. opaca (American holly)	

Are Two Holly Plants Needed For Berry Production?

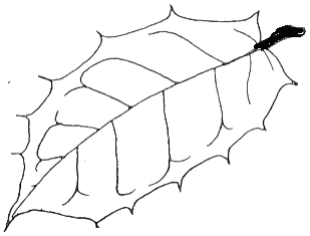
Individual holly plants do not produce both berries and pollen unless you purchase a plant that has been grafted and therefore has both sexes. Male (pollen producers) and female (berry producers) are separate plants as holly plants are dioecious. In nurseries, plants are labeled male or female. Be sure to purchase male and female plants of the same species that bloom at the same time. A single male plant can pollinate many females as insects carry holly pollen. Ideally male and female plants should be no less than 50' apart.

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Why Doesn't My Holly Have Berries?

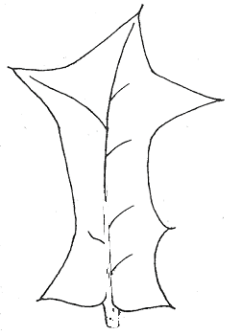
Your holly could be a male, or a female too distant from a compatible male that blooms at the right time. To determine sex, look carefully at the flowers. In males, the stamens (pollen bearing structures) are prominent and the pistil small. Female flowers have small stamens and a large central pistil. It may help to use a magnifying glass. Young hollies may not flower or bear fruit. The berries may be red, black, yellow, orange or blue, depending on the variety of holly.



American Holly

How Should Hollies Be Fertilized?

Hollies like acid soil, in the pH range of 4.5 to 5.5. A soil test can tell the pH (level of acidity) and need for specific nutrients. Contact your county Extension Office for assistance with soil testing. In mid-March spread fertilizer around the tree or shrub to 1½' beyond the tips of the branches. Water the fertilizer in thoroughly.



Chinese Holly

How and When Should Hollies Be Pruned?

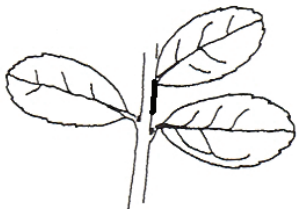
Hollies usually need little pruning except to remove dead, diseased or damaged branches or to take out the odd branch to maintain shape. *Ilex cornuta* (Chinese), *I. crenata* (Japanese), *I. glabra* (inkberry), and *I. vomitoria* (yaupon) can be severely pruned and will re-grow. There are upright varieties of some species that will make a narrow hedge without pruning. Most hollies should be pruned in their dormant season (winter).



Inkberry Holly

Pests and Diseases

The most common problems of hollies are leaf spot, leaf miner, scale and powdery mildew. Call your county Extension Office for treatment recommendations. Winter injury (leaf scorch) and spine spot are physiological abiotic problems.



Japanese Holly

Reference

Galle, F.C. (1997) Hollies: The Genus Ilex. Timber Press, Portland, OR.

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