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New Jersey Garden Clubs Help Protect New Jersey Holly

Conservation of the beautiful native plants of our State is one of the chief objectives of the garden clubs of New Jersey. By them much excellent educational work has been done. An important phase of this is directing attention to numerous beautiful substitutes which may be used instead of Holly for Christmas decorations. Still Holly seems typical of Christmas and the substitutes do not quite satisfy. Why not grow it for ourselves and our neighbors?

Inspired by the experiments of Dr. P. W. Zimmerman of the Boyce-Thompson Institute, I have for several years directed the skill gained in the development of blueberries to rooting cuttings from Holly trees of outstanding merit. The story is told on the next page.

You can now get Holly for your garden at a small price with no injury to any wild tree. The difficult work of starting it has all been done and it is sure to be the kind that bears berries.

Other Plants

We are now propagating by seed and cuttings a number of other beautiful native plants, so that without damage to wild stocks they may be intimately enjoyed by garden lovers.

Some of these are here described and priced. With others, such as Trailing Arbutus, we are making good progress. If Pine Barren plants other than those listed are desired we may be able to furnish them on inquiry.

May their growth in other gardens give joy equal to that experienced in guarding their first development in mine.

Elizabeth C. White.



Joseph J. White, Inc., Whitesbog, N. J.

Holly

(*Ilex opaca*)

Holly trees are like our orchard fruits in that individual seedlings vary widely in the character of leaves, fruit and type of growth. Some have leaves of dark glossy green, while others have leaves with a yellowish cast or a disagreeable tendency to spot. Some have flat leaves, others bear leaves that are frilly. Some are furnished with long slender leaves and others with leaves that are short and broad. The leaves of some trees have many spines and on others the older branches may carry leaves that are almost spineless. Some trees bear berries of a deep orange; rarely one has yellow berries, though on most they are crimson. Some trees have round berries, on others they are oval. Some pistillate trees bear regularly abundant crops of berries, while the berries on others are scant and irregular. All this in addition to the fact that Holly is dioecious, which means that about half the seedling trees are staminate and produce no berries at all.

The Holly plants we offer were grown from cuttings taken from trees growing on and in the vicinity of the farm where the writer has had her home for more than fifty years. Many of them are to her like personal friends, loved for their beauty of foliage and faithfulness in producing bountiful crops of cheery red berries.

Many have been the attempts to move wild Holly trees to gardens. When tiny trees are dug with plenty of soil this sometimes succeeds. It is safe to say, however, that more than ninety per cent of Holly trees die when moved from the wild and at least half of the few that survive never bear berries. Seedling trees, which of course includes all wild plants, do not produce flowers or berries until far past the size when moving is easy. Trees from cuttings, however, bear berries when very small.

The sex of a Holly tree can easily be determined without examination of the reproductive organs. The flowers of the berry bearing or pistillate trees are carried singly on the stem, while those of the staminate trees are in small clusters of from three to five. To insure berries on the pistillate trees it is necessary to have a staminate tree in the neighborhood. It need not be close. Several of the trees, full of berries every year, from which our cuttings were taken grow in solitary state at least a quarter of a mile from any other Holly.

Ernest H. Wilson in his "Aristocrats of the Trees", says, "Hollies resent injury to their bark more than any other tree.—Once established they are not particular as to the soil, provided

they get a proper supply of water at the roots". This resentment of injury extends to the roots. Those of the cuttings are as brittle as glass and require exceedingly careful handling. It is this resentment of mechanical injury which makes Holly so difficult to move.

Holly is found most abundantly in moist, partially shaded situations. It seems probable that this is because it is easier for tiny seedlings to survive in such locations for many of the large trees from which our cuttings were taken are standing on high, dry ground exposed to full sun and wind.

I have frequently known small Holly trees with well established root systems to push a leader up two to three feet in a season so it seems that Holly's reputation of being a slow growing plant is not altogether deserved. It does, however, require time for these slender switches to become the full branched specimens desired. During the first two or three years little trees from cuttings are apt to grow in rather a sprawly fashion and later, when the roots are well established, to start a leader heavenward with a rush.

Holly can be grown as beautiful specimen trees or as formal clipped hedges. It enjoys hard pruning. This is best done between mid-November and early April. Any twigs or branches growing so as to spoil the desired form of the tree may be removed without harm, even to a third of the leaf area. The leader may be shortened if it is growing out of bounds. Hard pruning results in finer foliage and more abundant berries the following season. The branches and twigs removed supply the best of Christmas decorations.

Holly should be in every garden, a living Christmas tree by the door. It should be the basis and the crown of all ornamental plantings along the New Jersey coast where it was originally abundant a short distance back from the beach.

We have a large stock of small plants which we guarantee as to sex. The pistillate plants produce berries when less than a foot high. The staminate plants were grown from trees with exceptionally beautiful foliage. Our method of root development insures ease in establishing the plants.

Plants from 3-in. pots \$1.00 each; \$9.00 for 10; \$75.00 per 100.

Plants from 5-in. pots \$1.75 each; \$15.00 for 10; \$100.00 per 100.

Prices of larger plants on request.

Pine Barren Gentian

(*Gentiana Porphyrio*)

The Pine Barren Gentian is one of the most slender and dainty, withal wiry and vigorous, little ladies that ever gladdened the eyes of a wild flower lover.

The writer vividly remembers the first time her eyes were so charmed. The cranberry bogs had been flooded to protect them from frost. While they were drying off next day harvesting operations were suspended; so father and daughter were at liberty to visit a neighbor's bog. In an old buggy, behind a plump brown horse, they drove along the winding pine road. The white sand showed only in narrow, parallel, meandering strips, for small trees and bushes just beginning to show touches of crimson and gold with their greens pressed close to the wheels and even made two gay runners between the path made by horses' hoofs and the wheel tracks.

Suddenly a glint of blue was seen. The old horse stopped and the blue beauty was gathered. A Pine Barren Gentian, two inches across with five firm, smooth-edged petals spread flat to welcome the sun and joined at the base in a wide throated bell. The upper edge of the bell between the petals was daintily fringed in a manner reminiscent of its cousin, the Fringed Gentian. Each petal near its base bore a triangle of minute, scattered, green dots and the throat was daintily marked with blue and white stripes. The stem, about twelve inches high, was flexible and wiry with narrow, grass-like leaves set alternately in pairs; and this was the whole of the plant. The flower was of amazing size for so slender a base.

Some years later Dr. Coville, having been told of this rare, shy denizen of the Jersey Pines, asked for some plants. The date of flowering had been forgotten, but it certainly bloomed in the frosty fall. A diligent search was rewarded by no lovely blue flowers, the season being too far advanced for that, but was finally crowned by finding one slender stem with two capsules still nearly full of seed. These were sent to Dr. Coville and in Washington, in the greenhouse devoted chiefly to blueberry seedlings, he reared a thrifty group of Pine Barren Gentians. A number of these plants were returned to Whitesbog and the seed they produced grew into our present stock of Gentians.

The Pine Barren Gentian is a perennial and

the original plants sent from Washington for many years developed ten to fifteen stems every season, each with from two to four flowers. Most of the bloom comes early in September, but occasional flowers open well into October.

The flowers vary somewhat in the shade of blue and a small percentage have four petals instead of five. The buds are slender, pointed, and neatly rolled in spiral form like the bud of a morning glory. When the flower is fully expanded the petals have a slight side-wise twist still suggesting the spiral. The flowers open several days in succession and each evening close neatly. The faded flowers are so accurately spiraled that they appear like buds to those not very familiar with the plant. As the seeds ripen the ovary stalk elongates and pushes the upper end of the capsule above the sheathing faded flower. The capsule splits at the tip and the myriads of tiny, slender seeds with which it is packed, are scattered by the swaying of the slender stalk in the wind.

The roots are large and fleshy, very little branched, nearly a foot long and grow straight down. When one attempts to dig a wild plant all tangled up with other roots it seems as if they must go all the way to China.

In the writer's garden many of these Gentians are growing in friendly company with winter-green or tea-berry (*Gaultheria procumbens*), as we like to call it in this part of Jersey. The Pine Barren Gentian is a rarely beautiful subject for the rock garden and, so far as the writer knows, has been grown by only a few people who visited Whitesbog and fell in love with it there.

Mrs. Edmond Sterling, who has a few plants in a backyard garden, in West Philadelphia, where she succeeds with blueberries and other acid soil plants, writes, "Each had one dainty, wonderful flower. We both made many visits to the blooming plants and greatly appreciated their extreme daintiness of coloring, especially the triangle of tiny, green dots at the base of each petal."

Miss Mary Wright says that she had no difficulty in having these Gentians bloom at the edge of a bit of wood in a Philadelphia suburb.

They are acid soil plants and should be given peat moss and sand, dug in deep to accommodate their amazingly long roots. Shipped in early spring.

\$1.00 per three delivered :: \$3.00 per ten delivered

Swamp Magnolia

(*Magnolia glauca*)

In May the flowers of our native Magnolia spread their waxy, creamy white petals to two or three inches in diameter and fill the air with delightful fragrance. Every one within reach of their balmy breath is tempted to carry away all of the lovely flowers that can be reached. Street peddlers gather the buds a few days before ready to open, force the petals back and sell the resulting fragrant monstrosities in nearby cities. So it happens that the Magnolia trees near our highways are usually broken and distorted. The flowers, when left to mature, are succeeded by cone-like seed vessels which early in September turn crimson, crack open and push out shining, scarlet seeds which dangle most fascinatingly on white threads. These crimson cones, with their scarlet seeds, are more strikingly ornamental even than the flowers.

It is the foliage, however, which, above everything else, makes these Magnolias highly desirable plants for our gardens. I know nothing else in the plant world with just the same color and quality of foliage. The leaves, of a firm leathery texture, are oval from one and a half to two inches wide and three to six inches long. The upper surface is a light, bright green, decidedly bluish in a tone with a buffed finish. The lower surface is silvery. Always remarkably fresh and lovely, it is in October that the foliage of our Magnolia becomes most conspicuously beautiful by steadfastly remaining the same color. In its natural setting its bright, light, silvery green is then contrasted with the

crimson and gold of other deciduous trees and shrubs and with the matt dark green of pine and cedar.

The bark of the older parts of Magnolia trees is smooth and silvery gray in color, but that of the younger growth is bright green. This coloring of the stout, vigorous stems makes the plant very ornamental even after the leaves have fallen. In sheltered places some of the most vigorous young shoots retain their leaves 'till spring.

Magnolia glauca is a shrubby tree reaching in New Jersey a maximum height of twenty to thirty feet. All parts of the plant—root, bark, or leaves—when cut or bruised emit a pleasant aromatic fragrance.

It is frequently spoken of as the Swamp Magnolia, and is found wild in comparatively moist situations. It thrives well, however, with no more moisture than is found in the average garden.

Collected plants are offered by some dealers, but unless they have had skilled nursery care for several years, such plants are apt to have unsatisfactory root systems or bark so bruised in the process of collecting that the future life of the plant is doubtful.

The plants we offer were started from seed in our nursery and the roots are in perfect condition.

Plants 9 to 12 inches high with amazingly large and vigorous root systems are offered.

\$1.00 each delivered : : \$9.00 per ten delivered : : Larger sizes quoted on request

Other Plants

Ilex glabra (Ink Berry) Evergreen Shrub especially good for seashore

18" -24", \$1.50 each; \$12.00 for 10

Leiophyllum buxifolium (Sand Myrtle) Small evergreen shrub

8" -9", \$1.00 for 3; \$2.50 for 10

Calluna vulgaris (Heather) White or purple, potted plants - - \$1.00 for 4; \$2.00 for 10

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Bearberry) Ground cover for sunny location

25 cents each; \$2.00 for 10

Lygodium palmatum (Climbing Fern) Exquisite, evergreen climber

\$1.00 each; \$15.00 per 100

