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U. S. National Arboretum

Native American Holly Farms

115 S. Penn Street

Manheim, Pennsylvania

The finest Hollies in the East

Member Holly Society of America

1956

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Introduction

A Holly tree, unlike many other trees, resembles people in that the trees are either Male or Female. The leaves of both trees are thick and spiny and are of a dark green color. Holly never sheds all of its leaves at one time; as a matter of fact it always retains the leaves for two years and in the spring when the new growth begins it then loses the leaves that formed two years ago and this cycle continues for the life of the tree. It is not unusual to find Holly for the first twenty years of its life, if properly cared for, to attain a growth of more than a foot a year. Holly trees are known to have grown 50 feet and taller and have attained trunk diameters of more than 2 feet. Some of these trees growing today are estimated to be 300 or more years old.

There is much folk-lore, legend and myth connected with the historical significance of Holly and in America we have Hollies that were planted at Williamsburg, Virginia and at Mount Vernon in the days of the early settlers. It is entirely possible that George Washington was instrumental in the planting of some of these old trees.

Unfortunately in America the better Hollies were not cared for properly and a large portion of the specimen trees were used as timber, or for the manufacture of furniture; the textile industry

also used large quantities in the production of bobbins and looms. In later years much of the remaining Holly was cut for Holiday decorations with little thought given toward the replanting of the trees that were destroyed in this manner.

Holly has played a picturesque part in the history of the world. History tells us that in the old days the ancient Druids carried on their old custom of burning the Yule Log which signified the burning out of old wrongs and heartaches. No one on whom the light of this flame fell could cherish any resentment or have any ill feeling toward their fellow men. A little while later in history we find that the Christians used Holly as a Christmas Green because the spiny tipped leaves and bright red berries of the Holly symbolized the Crown of Thorns and Drops of Blood that Our Lord Jesus shed for us.

Species of Holly

There are over 500 recognized species of Holly, and many more that have not been validated. Most of these are of little or no significance to the average person and we will mention only a few of the more commonly recognized varieties.

Ilex Opaca—American Holly—Leaves are dull to a glossy green and vary in size and shape. In

general the American Holly has a very definite spine tip on the leaves and the fruit is predominately bright red although some varieties produce yellow or orange fruit.

Ilex Crenata—Japanese Holly—Small boxwood like leaves and the fruit is black.

Ilex Aquifolium—English Holly—Large glossy green leaves with prominent spines and the fruit is red. There are many variations of English Holly in that the leaves may be entirely green, or they might have a variegated edge or center. The fruit is generally red but on some varieties it might be yellow or orange. There are also sterile varieties that bear no fruit.

Ilex Cornuta—Chinese Holly—Leaves are dark green and generally have only about 5 spines. The fruit is usually red although some varieties produce yellow fruit.

It was mentioned that there are over 500 species of Holly. There are many varieties within every species and when a good seedling or tree is discovered that warrants propagation and naming this is generally done by the discoverer and we have a new named variety. This has been done rather freely in the past and emphasis is now placed upon a very thorough check on existing Hollies before naming and producing additional varieties.

Sex of Hollies

Most Hollies have a definite sex, that is, either male or female. In young Hollies it is impossible to tell them apart until they are old enough to blossom since the leaves and general appearance of both sex trees are identical. The flower of the female tree when pollinated forms the berry and although the male does not bear fruit it is necessary to have a male tree close enough to the female so that the bees and insects as well as normal air currents will carry the pollen from the male or staminate flower to the female or pistillate flower.

Your Holly will bloom in early May. The difference between the male and female trees can be determined by noting the difference in the blossoms. The flowers of the male tree grow in clusters and the stamens are large and erect, and the pistil or center of the flower is quite small. On the female Hollies we find only one flower on a stem, the stamens appear small and withered and the pistil is a large greenish knob which develops into the berry when pollinated by the male flower.

In the growing of isolated Hollies it must be remembered that both sex trees must be in the immediate vicinity in order to have the female produce berries. Hollies have been known to produce berries when the trees have been separated several miles but there is no assurance that pollina-

tion will take place at great distances. It is best to plant them as close as practical and more complete pollination will take place if they are within several hundred feet or closer.

In the planting of different species of Holly you must have a male tree of each because Hollies do not generally cross-pollinate between species, e.g., you must have both a male and female American Holly and a male and female English Holly in order to produce berries on each species.

If your Hollies do not produce berries one or more of the following might well be the cause of your trouble.

1. Possibly your Holly is too young to bloom and bear fruit.
2. Possibly both of your trees are of the same sex.
3. Possibly your male and female tree are of different species.
4. Possibly your male tree does not bloom at the same time as the female.
5. Your Holly should be kept well fertilized to obtain good natural growth and it should be kept adequately watered in hot dry weather. If the tree appears diseased see your nurseryman.
6. If none of the above causes are prevalent sometimes a good root pruning will be sufficient stimulant to force flowering and berries.

Propagation of Holly

The natural way to produce any plant or tree is from seed. Hollies may be produced in this manner but in so doing there is no assurance that the seedling when sprouted and grown will have the same leaf formation, color or berrying characteristics as the parent tree. It cannot even be said that the tree will be a male or female because Hollies have sex just like you and I and various sources indicate that it is quite likely that from 5 to 10 male trees germinate to every female when grown from seed. Most Hollies require approximately two years for the seeds to germinate so if it is your intention to attempt to grow any Holly seedlings be sure to plant them where they can be cared for over a 2 year period without being destroyed.

The normal and practical way to produce Hollies is by grafting, budding or planting cuttings from the tree that you wish to reproduce. Because there are both male and female Holly trees it is necessary to root cuttings from both sexes in order to have known male and female stock available. Remember that it is the female tree that produces the berries. Carefully mark all your cuttings so that at a later date you will know which is which. Cuttings from a female tree will produce another female tree when rooted and the same holds true of the male.

A Word about Our Nursery

While it is desirable to have tall stately specimen Holly trees the cost is prohibitive to the average person. The alternate is to secure good stock properly grown of a size that can be afforded on the average family budget. At our nursery we are producing this kind of stock. We are specializing in *Ilex Opaca*, or American Holly, which is a beautiful evergreen tree with very definite spine tips on the leaves and produces bright red fruit when the weather turns cold. This variety is very winter hardy and is native to the eastern seaboard as well as the southern part of our country west to Texas. It is also known to grow in much colder climates very successfully without winter damage.

We are also growing quantities of English, Chinese and Japanese Hollies. These Hollies are not nearly as winter hardy as the American Hollies and in climates where the temperatures go to zero or below we are unable to guarantee that there will be no freeze-back. We definitely recommend that the English Hollies be given winter protection by placing a screen of burlap around them to protect them from the extreme cold. In the case of small Hollies a peach basket inverted over the young tree provides excellent protection.

The Green Hollies are more resistant to extreme cold than the variegated. It is also true that the

older the tree becomes the less danger of cold weather damage. If partial freeze-back should occur the trees will stage a quick recovery in early spring if proper precautions are taken in late fall to make sure that the Hollies have plenty of water before the ground freezes.

We seldom sell any stock that is less than 3 years of age and a minimum height of 18 to 20 inches. We believe that in order to produce a tree that can be successfully grown by the average home owner that this is the minimum requirement. All of our trees are grown from the best cutting stock available. All trees are banded and numbered for identification purposes and are grown outdoors in order to produce trees that will withstand transplanting and cold weather. In order to produce good complete root systems all of our trees are grown in pots which means that when they are delivered to you they can be planted in your yard or garden without fear of losing the tree because the roots have not been disturbed through digging. This method also makes transportation more satisfactory because they can be carried away in your car or packaged by us in a special container for shipment by parcel post or express.

We are also producing some larger Hollies grown in containers as large as 5 gallons. These Hollies may be planted any time of the year since the Holly is to be planted without removing it from the container.

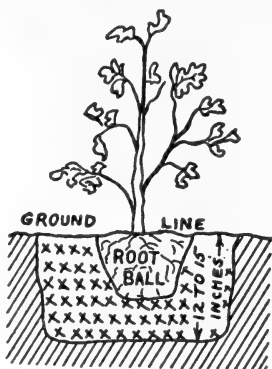
Planting of Hollies

Your potted Holly should be planted in well drained ground and will grow almost equally well in any kind of soil, if proper precautions are observed when planting. Holly may be planted outside any time the ground is open but it is generally agreed that the best period is during the dormant season. A potted Holly obtained during the Christmas season should be planted outdoors just as early in the year as the proper hole can be prepared.

Holly is a tree native to the woods. Woods soil is acid or sour, so when planting your Holly it is best to try to reproduce this natural condition. This can be accomplished in several ways. Obtain a bushel of leaf mold or woods soil from the nearby-woods and mix with an equal part of good top soil and add 1 part organic Holly-Tone fertilizer to 30 parts of the previously described mixture. If woods soil is not available peat-moss may be substituted in the same quantity. A 5 pound bag of Holly-Tone will plant 3 trees, so use only $\frac{1}{3}$ of a bag per tree.

Remove your plant from the 6 inch clay pot. Be careful not to disturb the root ball when you take it out. If the tree is completely pot bound take a sharp knife and cut a cross $\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep on the bottom only of the root ball. This will allow the roots to grow outward more rapidly rather than to continue growing in a circle the shape of the pot.

Dig out one bushel of top soil. Now remove an additional bushel of sub-soil. Throw sub-soil away. Mix top soil with equal quantity of woods soil or peat-moss and fertilizer. Fill hole partially and water thoroughly. Set plant in partially filled hole and complete filling hole to ground level using plenty of water.



Your Holly may be planted in almost any location in your yard, but remember if given proper room and sunlight it will grow into a large tree and it should not be cramped.

Most people prefer to use the Female or berry producing trees in the more conspicuous locations and plant the Male tree in a more isolated spot on the property. If you have limited space it is very desirable to locate several Female Hollies so that they will be symmetrical with the front, side or rear of your residence.

Care of Hollies

In the summer months for the first 2 years after planting give them protection from the sun by fastening a piece of burlap or cloth to 4 stakes

driven into the ground around the tree. This serves as an umbrella and may be removed just as soon as the tree has become firmly established. In dry weather water your Hollies thoroughly twice a week. It is good practice to water the ground around the tree in about a 6 foot circle so that the root system will be expanded rapidly. Do not water just a little every day, when you water do a thorough job. Plant your Hollies if possible where they can be enjoyed from your window during the winter months.

It is well to place a wire screen about a foot high around the trunks of your trees if you are troubled with rabbits. You should also refrain from mulching the tree in winter with straw or leaves. If you do this it serves as a natural harbor for field mice and they will eat the bark underneath the mulch you have provided and this might kill the tree.

In order to have your Holly make satisfactory growth it requires food. During the first few years after planting complete organic fertilizer does a grand job. This can be supplemented with small amounts of chicken manure if allowed to leach into the soil. As a tree becomes more mature chemical fertilizers may be used in modest amounts with beneficial results. It is good practice to punch a series of holes in the ground around the trunk of the tree and then fill these holes with fertilizer. This method gets the food to the roots and if this

is done in early spring before growth starts you will get maximum results from every pound of food.

Hollies have two principal insect pests that attack them, namely Leaf Miner and Red Mite. The Leaf Miner is controlled by spraying with 50% Wettable DDT Powder in the spring when the new growth shows 2 or 3 new leaves. Two sprayings at 1 week intervals should take care of killing the Leaf Miner. The Red Mite can be controlled by spraying with Aramite as required. Complete directions covering concentration of spray will be found on insecticide packages.

Holly Hedges

Hollies may be used very successfully as a hedge, and no plant or tree will do a better job. Hollies planted 20 to 24 inches apart will make the most beautiful hedge imaginable and it may be severely trimmed to keep it low, or it may be allowed to grow to a considerable height and still be a thing of beauty. Hollies planted as a hedge can be trimmed either formally or allowed to grow naturally into a very dense natural looking barrier. Hollies when planted in this manner should be planted in a trench of prepared soil and should be accurately spaced.

Transplanting Large Hollies

If a large Holly is wanted this can be transplanted most successfully if a trench is dug around the tree a year prior to moving. Simply dig the trench the size of the earth ball that you intend to move with the tree and then back fill with good soil rich in humus. Allow the tree to remain in its present location until next year and you will find that the root system has become much denser close to the tree because of the root pruning given it a year ago and the Holly will survive transplanting much more readily.

Your Christmas Holly

Your Holly may be pruned in winter around Christmas. Proper pruning will stimulate spring growth and also give you beautiful cut Holly for the Holidays. Cut Holly should be handled just as you would handle cut flowers. Always place it in water and it will stay beautiful for weeks.

Holly may be used in the making of Christmas wreaths either by itself or in combination with other evergreen material. It may likewise be used to advantage in the making of door garlands in combination with canes, evergreen boughs and brightly colored ribbons.

A Holly apple makes a wonderful ornament for doorways. This is made by selecting a firm red apple and drawing a narrow red ribbon through the core of the apple. Select nicely berried Holly tips about 3 inches long and completely cover the apple by inserting the stems into the apple. Attach a small red bow in combination with mistletoe to the ribbon on the bottom of the apple and hang in the center of the doorway. The juice of the apple will keep the Holly fresh during the Holidays.

We have mentioned only a few of the many possible decorative arrangements in order to show you what can be done with Holly as a Christmas decoration. All of the cut Holly that you can possibly use may be had from your own trees in several years if you decide to plant your trees promptly.



We would suggest that you become affiliated with the
—HOLLY SOCIETY OF AMERICA—

Complete information may be had by writing directly to
Mr. Charles A. Young, Jr.
Holly Society of America, Inc.
Bergner Mansion, Gwynn Falls Park
Baltimore 16, Maryland

The best planting time is between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Nursery open daily and Sunday Afternoons during this period, except Holidays. We ship by insured Parcel Post between October 1st and May 1st when Hollies are dormant.

For that Sunday Drive

Just 6 Miles from the Pennsylvania Turnpike



Turn west at square 3 blocks to Penn Street. South on Penn Street 1½ blocks to Holly Farms.