

Ilex - Growing Guide

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Holly

Holly trees are generally thought of as prickly windbreak trees whose berries make seasonal Christmas decorations. However, the genus is vast and variable, and hollies come in many different shapes and sizes both as regards their leaves and in the way that they grow. Not all species are actually evergreen and many make attractive ornamental trees in the garden with a range of different displays of berries.

All species and varieties of holly which we offer are perfectly hardy but it has to be recognised that male and female flowers are usually (but not always) borne on separate trees. You will need to grow plants of both sexes reasonably close by (or reasonably near common holly, *Ilex aquifolium*) to obtain a crop of berries on female forms.

Ilex aquifolium has a multitude of different varieties with attractive and different leaves. These are basically smaller windbreak or hedging trees with ornamental value in the garden.

'Argentea Marginata'	Female	Cream streaked green leaves and abundant red berries	12f
'Atlas'	Male	Dark green shiny leaves	15f
'Bacciflava'	Female	Striking and unusual yellow berries	30f

'Ferox Argentea'	Male	Creamy-white leaf margins on convoluted and puckered leaves with large spines	25f
'Golden van Tol'	Female	Pyramidal habit and yellow edged leaves. Orange berries.	12f
'J C van Tol'	Female	Dark and nearly spineless green leaves and red berries	20f
'Pyramidalis'		Self-fertile with a conical upright habit. Red berries.	20f
'Silver Queen'	Male	Broad creamy margins to its spiny leaves	30f

Ilex x altaclarensis varieties make larger freestanding ornamental trees in the garden and are generally grown for this purpose often to shelter more tender plants from wind in the lee. Those with variegated foliage perform best in full sun.

'Belgica Aurea'	Female	Creamy edged leaves	40f
'Camelliifolia'	Female	This variety grows into a large tree with shiny green leaves and relatively few spines	45f

Ilex x meserveae 'Blue Prince' and 'Blue Princess' are male and free berrying female forms of the 'Blue holly' which are dense, spreading shrubs which resemble *L. aquifolium* and have similar uses in the garden. 15ft.

Other more unusual species hollies in the Burncoose catalogue have varying ultimate heights in the garden and varying uses.

I. perado grows with us as a dense thicket 20-30ft tall and, despite coming from the Canary Islands, it makes an excellent hedge or windbreak. Berries persist into the spring and feature with the flowers. This species has been readily self-sown around the gardens here by birds.

I. perado subsp. *platyphylla* has the largest leaves (6-12in) of any holly we know. It grows to 30ft and spreads quickly by suckering and layering itself. It is the best windbreak we know for being in the teeth of salt laden gales and widely used for this purpose.

I. crenata 'Golden Gem' (Japanese holly) – this is a dwarf growing female holly with golden yellow leaves growing to only 3ft or so. *I. crenata* varieties can make good informal edging plants in place of diseased box.

I. x koehneana 'Chestnut Leaf' is self-fertile with purplish new growth fading to large, glossy green leaves. Grows to around 20ft and is aptly named.

I. springera, Persian holly, is a female berrying species with a spreading habit (15ft x 15ft) and undulating deeply spined leaves. It grows well with us in shade as an interesting ornamental plant.

I. verticellata, Black alder or Winterberry, is a suckering deciduous tree which grows with us to around 15-20ft. It flowers in the spring and produces red fruits.

I. kingiana is coming into production in the nursery along with the fairly similar *I. latifolia*. Both grow into 25-30ft trees. *I. kingiana* especially has berries which only really ripen and turn red in the spring providing a great spectacle alongside the flowers. Both species have naturalised

themselves here and there in the garden.

Ilex Aquifolium 'Bacciflava' - Video Tip

Yellow berries for Christmas decorations.

View this video on Youtube here https://www.youtube.com/5RBBvD30T_M

I. Verticillata & Dimorphophylla - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/fc89yPKAdpU>

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