Mexican Summer Holly

Comarostaphylis discolor



Mexican Summer Holly flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: Arbutus discolor, Comarostaphylis arguta

Description:

A little seen, but highly attractive large shrub or small tree, producing lily-of-the-valley like flower clusters in spring, followed by bright red berries in summer; a great water conservation choice, perfect for dry areas

Ornamental Features

Mexican Summer Holly features showy clusters of pink bell-shaped flowers at the ends of the branches from early to mid spring. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage which emerges coppery-bronze in spring. The glossy narrow leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries in mid summer.

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Summer Holly is an open multi-stemmed evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Mexican Summer Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Mexican Summer Holly will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a low canopy, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.

Mexican Summer Holly is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.