Bessie Smith Holly

Ilex 'Bessie Smith'



Bessie Smith Holly
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

This beautiful holly is suitable for use as a screen with its tidy, pyramidal habit; splendid rich, dark green, glossy leaves with lighter green undersides; abundant red fruit in winter make this a great addition to the landscape

Ornamental Features

Bessie Smith Holly is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries in late fall. It has attractive dark green foliage with light green undersides. The spiny oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter.



Bessie Smith Holly foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Bessie Smith Holly is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen tree with a distinctive and refined pyramidal form. 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 and bees to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Bessie Smith Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Bessie Smith Holly will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium 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 does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid.