Castle Keep® Meserve Holly

Ilex x meserveae 'SMNIFA'



Castle Keep Meserve Holly
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5

Other Names: Blue Holly

Description:

One of the hardiest of the evergreen hollies, this is a compact, rounded selection with soft-to-the-touch deep green foliage and showy red berries in winter; keeps a nice shape without pruning; requires a male pollinator, often paired with Castle Wall

Ornamental Features

Castle Keep Meserve Holly is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries from mid fall to late winter. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage which emerges chartreuse in spring. The glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Castle Keep Meserve Holly is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a more or less rounded 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 shrub, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Castle Keep Meserve Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Castle Keep Meserve Holly will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more. This is a female variety of the species which requires a male selection of the same species growing nearby in order to set fruit.

This shrub does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in partial shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant will benefit from an application of bonemeal and/or mycorrhizal fertilizer at the time of planting. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. 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.

Castle Keep Meserve Holly makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants 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.