English Holly

Ilex aquifolium



English Holly foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 25 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Christmas Holly, Mexican Holly, European Holly

Description:

A holly valued for its extremely colorful red berries which last throughout winter on female plants; attractive, glossy, dark green foliage; upright growth habit; requires moist to wet highly acidic soil

Ornamental Features

English 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 evergreen foliage. The spiny pointy leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

English Holly is a dense 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.



English Holly
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

English Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

English Holly will grow to be about 25 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet 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 prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some 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 species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.