

American Holly

Ilex opaca

Height: 30-50' | Spread: 15-25' | Light: ☉-☿ | Moisture: dry-moist



American holly is a slow-growing evergreen tree that adds year-round beauty to landscaping. Hollies make great privacy screens and are often planted in groups. If you plant American holly for the bright red berries, you will need to plant more than one to make sure you have both male and female plants. American holly provides important wildlife services. The flowers are pollinated by insects including bees, wasps, ants and night-flying moths. Many species of birds and mammals eat the bitter berries, but the fruits are poisonous to humans. The tree also forms a thick canopy which offers protection for birds from predators and storms.

American holly is the larval plant for Henry's Elfin butterfly. This is the holly whose berry-laden boughs are typically collected at Christmas time each year for ornamentation ("decking the halls" as it were).



Photos courtesy of Bugwood.org: Chris Evans, University of Illinois; T. Davis Sydnor, The Ohio State University

