

Holly - *Ilex aquifolium*



Medium tree: (4:6:20)



Shiny evergreen leaves have a waxy upperside and spiny edges. Only the female trees have the bright red berries.

The holly is a very widespread native tree which grows on almost any soil. It tolerates shade well, often grows as the understorey in woodlands but also like open situations and occurs widely in hedgerows.

Its hard, white wood takes stain well and was traditionally known as 'English ebony'. It was particularly used for carving and inlay, whilst the shoots with berries are used for Christmas decorations.

The berries are eaten by birds, the foliage by deer and rabbits. Holly is also the foodplant of the holly blue butterfly, but only nine other invertebrate species have been found feeding on this tree.

Seed Guide: Collect the ripe, red berries from the tree in winter. Remove the seeds from the flesh and wash them thoroughly. Soak the berries for a day or two if the flesh is hard to remove. Stratify the seed for one or more winters. Select and sow germinating seeds each spring.