

EBERSOLE HOLLY COLLECTION
Sandhills Horticultural Gardens

Pinehurst, NC (USDA Hardiness Zone 7b)

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The year 2009 was a good year for our holly collection, with the exception of the English Holly Collection. We continue to see a steady decline within this species. Listed below are the hollies which we have removed from the collection.

- I. aquifolium* 'Longspray'
- I. rugosa x aquifolium* 'Blue Boy'
- I. x meserveae* 'Blue Stallion'
- I. rugosa x aquifolium* 'Blue Prince'
- I. aquifolium* 'Ferox Argenta'
- I. aquifolium* 'Silver Milkmaid'
- I. aquifolium* 'Father Charles'
- I. aquifolium* 'Dude'

Other hollies which we lost this year are as follows:

- I. crenata* 'Tiny'
- I. crenata* 'Stokes'
- I. crenata* 'Compacta'
- I. verticillata* 'Red Sprite'
- I. opaca* 'Delia'

We are observing the decline of more Japanese Hollies as well. After battling root rot on the *compacta* Hollies which line the drive into our Visitors Center, we decided to remove all of them. We are even experiencing some loss of the Chesapeake Hollies in the Sir Walter Raleigh Garden as well.

Even though we seem to be losing the battle on the English Hollies, we do not intend to give up. We have renewed hope with how well the grafted English hollies are doing and we are working with Hefner's Nursery in Conover, N.C. to save the ones we still have. The nursery is helping us by grafting cuttings onto 'Nellie R. Stevens' understock and it has been very successful. We will keep you posted on the outcome.

Weather wise it was pretty uneventful in 2009. The most effect I have seen weather wise was on the berry set on the American Hollies. In December we had several days of unusually cold weather which seems to have caused the ripe berries to freeze and then fall off. Our American Hollies are struggling under some pretty dense pine canopy and are thinning out. Otherwise, they are thriving and doing well. One of the stars is 'Lady Alice', which seems to have a very nice shape, regardless of the dense shade. And, of course, always outperforming many others is our very own 'Clarendon Spreading'. This plant is absolutely huge and continues to do very well in the garden.

The Chinese Holly collection continues to do very well for us here in the Sandhills. Our only problem is keeping them under control with pruning. The berry set is excellent and is still persistent, even with the onslaught of bird species that frequent the collection.

In 2010 we plan to work on the Deciduous Holly Collection. This collection sits adjacent to a wetland area which is very overgrown. We have already worked on cutting back some of the growth which is inching its way towards this collection and now we plan to work on cutting back some of the specimens to a more controllable size.

As indicated above, we are losing some of our Japanese Hollies to a root rot of some kind. Otherwise, they are doing fairly well. We have worked this year on pruning out deadwood and now plan to work on the fact that they appear nutrient stressed.

Overall, besides the loss of our English hollies, the Ebersole Holly Collection is doing well and we look forward to doing more work on the hollies in 2010.

Johanna Westmen