

The Polly Hill Arboretum

West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts  
(USDA Hardiness Zone 7a)

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

As of the writing of this report in early 2010, the living collection at the Polly Hill Arboretum includes 103 *Ilex* taxa represented by 203 individual plants. The observations and data on which this report is based were collected by Thomas E. Clark, Collections & Grounds Manager, and Nancy Weaver, Volunteer Coordinator & Plant Recorder.

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The weather during 2009 can be characterized as having been generally warmer and wetter than average. The lowest temperature recorded was 4°F (-15.6°C) on January 16 and 17, and the highest temperature recorded was 89°F (31.7°C) on August 12. Total precipitation was 7.86" (19.96cm) above the annual average of 45.82" (116.38cm). The Summer months (June, July, August) were distinctly wetter than average. This additional rainfall helped to support good growth and fruit development, particularly in July which is typically the driest month of the year. Table 1 details the 2009 weather.

Table 1. Temperature and precipitation summaries for 2009<sup>1</sup>

Month	Monthly mean temp.	departure from norm	Monthly precip.	departure from norm
January	35.1°F (1.7°C)	-2.5°F (-1.39°C)	5.08" (12.90cm)	1.41" (3.58cm)
February	34.1°F (1.2°C)	4.1°F (2.28°C)	1.90" (4.83cm)	-2.22" (-5.64cm)
March	38.5°F (3.6°C)	2.0°F (1.11°C)	4.29" (10.90cm)	0.26" (0.66cm)
April	49.1°F (9.5°C)	4.3°F (2.39°C)	4.72" (11.99cm)	0.44" (1.12cm)
May	56.8°F (13.8°C)	2.9°F (1.61°C)	3.32" (8.43cm)	-0.93" (-2.36cm)
June	62.0°F (16.7°C)	-1.2°F (-0.66°C)	3.67" (9.32cm)	1.02" (2.59cm)
July	69.5°F (20.8°C)	0.0°F (0.0°C)	4.82" (12.24cm)	2.63" (6.68cm)
August	73.4°F (23.0°C)	4.7°F (2.61°C)	6.58" (16.71cm)	2.15" (5.46cm)
September	64.0°F (17.8°C)	1.0°F (0.56°C)	3.53" (8.97cm)	-0.03" (-0.08cm)
October	53.4°F (11.9°C)	-0.9°F (-0.5°C)	7.77" (19.74cm)	4.38" (11.13cm)
November	50.6°F (10.3°C)	6.0°F (3.33°C)	1.93" (4.90cm)	-2.47" (-6.27cm)
December	35.2°F (1.8°C)	1.0°F (0.56°C)	6.07" (15.42cm)	1.66" (4.22cm)
2009 Total			53.68" (136.35cm)	7.86 (19.96cm)

<sup>1</sup> Weather data was recorded by Mark Alan Lovewell in Edgartown, Massachusetts

Plants of five new taxa of *Ilex* were added to the collection during 2009; all derived from the HSA annual meeting held on Martha's Vineyard. The new taxa are *I.* 'A51517', *I.* 'Hugger', *I.* ×*attenuata* 'Bronze Beauty', *I.* ×*attenuata* 'Longwood Gold' and *I. serrata* 'Longwood Firefall'. Only one holy was removed from the collection in 2009, *I. opaca* 'Clarissa', which died over the winter of 2008/09 after having been planted in spring 2008.

*Ilex* performed generally quite well in 2009. Overall, clones of *I. opaca* were highly rated and fruit set on most of these was moderately heavy to heavy. Particularly fine cultivars included 'Canary', 'Martha's Vineyard', 'Villanova', 'Satyr Hill' and the forma *xanthocarpa*. *Ilex* 'Pernella', *I. x altaclerensis* 'NYBG No. 2' and *I. aquifolium* 'Evangeline' performed exceptionally well in 2009. Damage caused by holly berry midge (*Asphondylia ilicicola*) was observed on some selections of *Ilex opaca* including 'Barnard Luce', 'Miss Helen' and 'Greenhill'. In a few cases, overall showiness of the fruit display was significantly and negatively impacted. A leaf spot disease and the tell-tale tracks of a species of leaf miner were noted on *I. opaca* but neither was encountered with regularity.

There are currently no official holly-related research projects underway at Polly Hill Arboretum.

In October 2009 the Arboretum had the honor of welcoming attendees of the 2009 HSA annual meeting to the Arboretum for an afternoon clambake and tour of the holly collection and grounds. During this tour several members expressed interest in an unnamed clone of *Ilex opaca* with particularly large fruit. The Arboretum is propagating this clone and hopes to be able to distribute it to willing collaborators for further evaluation.

-Thomas E. Clark,  
Collections & Grounds Manager