

Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest

Clermont, Kentucky

USDA Hardiness Zone 6

Bernheim has experienced another great year of growing and connecting people with nature. We welcomed over 200,000 visitors and were active in many projects within the Arboretum, our forests, and well beyond our borders. Our plant collections continue to thrive as we acclimate to the ever-wavering weather patterns. Rainfall was average, with a dry period in the summer that contributed to some leaf drop in the *Aesculus* collection that was quickly restored by late summer rainfall. The weather headline for us and many others this year was the record heat we experienced. Temperature readings well over 100 °F (37.8 °C), for extended periods, is a rarity for our region. As these weather extremes continue to evolve and become predictable events it will be interesting to see which collections are able to acclimate to these changes. Our minimum and maximum temperatures continue to climb, pushing zone boundaries for Bernheim and many others.

The holly collection has fared well with the seasons and continues to be a great attraction for visitors and holly enthusiasts alike. Bernheim shared cuttings from our collection throughout the country, helping to expand our outreach and offer cultivars of historical value. Growth is evident throughout the collection and berries were plentiful on all specimens. We have discovered that the rabbits are particularly fond of the *Ilex* × *koehneana*, keeping the lower 18 inches (45.7 cm) of each plant carefully pruned off the ground. Once thought to be marginally hardy in zone 6, these hollies have thrived, avoiding leaf burn in winter and enduring extreme heat and drought. We would recommend this plant to any holly fanatic who is looking for *Ilex* with a good temperament and a great form. While most of our hollies performed spectacularly, several *I. opaca* were outstanding this year: Chief Paduke (1979-0029-00) with a slim, graceful form and broad leaves was fully berried and beautiful; Elephant Berry (1977-0035-06) lived up to its name with large, plump fruits; William Hawkins (1989-0039-00) with its odd habit and harsh leaf spines made for a good conversation piece. Leaf miner was a bit of a problem early in the year for some accessions but was not above tolerable thresholds.

Bernheim has begun construction on our Edible Garden project which is a step in another of our future horticultural missions: teaching the principles of growing sustainably and responsibly while reducing the disconnect between people and their food. You can keep up with our progress in this new endeavor and all of Bernheim's gardens and projects by visiting our website, www.bernheim.org.

Eric H. Garris

Curator, Hubbuch Holly Collection