

Missouri Botanical Garden  
St. Louis, Mo.  
USDA Hardiness Zone 6b

2012 was our warmest year on record. The year started with a very mild winter with little snow. Spring was early with warm temperatures and good moisture levels. This resulted in a very beautiful spring as everything bloomed together. This was followed by a very hot, dry summer and a warm, dry fall. The end of June and early July gave us ten days in a row of over 100° F (38° C) and a total of nineteen days with temperatures over 100° F (38° C). We ended the year over 8 inches (20.3 cm) short on rainfall.

These weather conditions resulted in a very heavy fruit set on the hollies and most other trees and shrubs. This also resulted in sparse leaf growth. We are concerned about growth in 2013 because most plants produced so much fruit this year. The hollies were beautiful this fall with very heavy fruit set. In late summer many of our older hollies lost branches due to the drought. These branches suddenly turned black, lost their leaves, and died.

We lost two very old *Ilex opacas* this summer to root rot. One was taken down and the other was uprooted in a storm. Several other old *I. opaca* are hollow and declining.

Additions of *Ilex* to the Missouri Botanical Garden include *I. myrtifolia* 'Woolander Weeping', *I. colchica*, *I. opaca* 'Villanova', *I. opaca* 'Dan Fenton', and *I. opaca* 'Lake City'.

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