

The Polly Hill Arboretum  
West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts  
(USDA Hardiness Zone 7a)

As of the writing of this report in February 2013, the living collection at the Polly Hill Arboretum includes 96 *Ilex* taxa represented by 181 individual plants. The observations and data on which this report is based were collected by Thomas E. Clark, Curator, and Nancy Weaver, Volunteer Coordinator & Plant Recorder.

The weather at the Polly Hill Arboretum during 2012 can be characterized as having been generally warmer and drier than average. The lowest temperature recorded was 12° F (−11.1° C) on January 15 and 16, and the highest temperature recorded was 93° F (33.9° C) on June 21 & 22. Total precipitation was 6.26" (159.00 mm) below the annual average. May, July and December were distinctly wetter than average, but several months (most noticeably March and April) were distinctly drier. Hurricane Sandy heavily affected the northeast in late October, but Martha's Vineyard and the Arboretum suffered minimal damage. Some wind damage was evident in the living collection but only minimal damage to any *Ilex* was observed. Table 1 details the 2012 weather.

Table 1. Temperature and precipitation summaries for 2012

Month	Monthly mean temp.	Monthly precip.	departure from norm
January	38° F (3.3° C)	3.04" (77.22 mm)	−0.64" (−16.26 mm)
February	37° F (2.8° C)	2.14" (54.36 mm)	−1.08" (−27.43 mm)
March	45° F (7.2° C)	1.03" (26.16 mm)	−3.23" (−82.04 mm)
April	50° F (10.0° C)	1.62" (41.15 mm)	−2.40" (−60.96 mm)
May	60° F (15.6° C)	5.51" (139.95 mm)	1.90" (48.26 mm)
June	65° F (18.3° C)	1.59" (40.39 mm)	−1.84" (−46.74 mm)
July	73° F (22.8° C)	4.49" (114.05 mm)	1.61" (40.89 mm)
August	73° F (22.8° C)	2.41" (61.21mm)	−1.31" (−33.27 mm)
September	64° F (17.8° C)	3.43" (87.12 mm)	0.31" (7.87mm)
October	58° F (14.4° C)	3.63" (92.20 mm)	0.25" (6.35 mm)
November	42° F (5.6° C)	2.79" (70.87 mm)	−1.56" (−39.62 mm)
December	39° F (3.9° C)	6.07" (154.18 mm)	1.73" (43.94 mm)
2012 Total		37.75" (958.85 mm)	−6.26 (−159.00 mm)

Three new *Ilex* taxa were accessioned in 2012: *I. fargesii*, *I. myrtifolia* and *I. vomitoria* – all as wild-collected seed. Five hollies (4 taxa) were removed from the collection in 2012: *I. aquifolium* (male), *I. aquifolium* 'Winter Queen', *I. montana* and *I. verticillata* 'Shaver'. These plants were removed due to overcrowding, and/or poor performance.

*Ilex* performed generally quite well in 2012. Many clones of *Ilex opaca* performed exceptionally well and more than a few are among the mostly highly rated hollies for 2012. *Ilex opaca* cultivars of note for excellent performance and heavy fruit set include 'Barnard Luce'\* 'Canary', 'Chief Paduke', 'Jersey Princess', 'Martha's Vineyard'\* , 'Miss Helen', 'St. Mary', 'Villanova'\* and f. *xanthocarpa*. Damage to American hollies caused by holly berry midge (*Asphondylia ilicicola*) continues to be a sporadic problem, though damage was very limited this year. *Ilex* × *altaclerensis* 'Camelliifolia' proved again to be a wonderful plant for its large, showy fruit and its lustrous, dark green, entire to nearly-entire leaves on a distinctly upright plant. *Ilex* 'Pernella'\* and *I. aquifolium* 'Evangeline' also performed exceptionally well in 2012. For deciduous hollies, *I. decidua* and several cultivars including 'Council Fire', 'Pocahontas', 'Sundance' and 'Warren's Red' had moderately abundant fruit. (\* indicates Polly Hill selections)

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

**2012 HSA Holly of the Year – *Ilex aquifolium* 'Proud Mary'**

This clone is not currently being grown at PHA.

-Thomas E. Clark, Curator