

THE POLLY HILL ARBORETUM

West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard, MA USDA Hardiness Zone 7a

As of the writing of this report, the living collection at the Polly Hill Arboretum includes 94 *Ilex* taxa represented by 180 individual plants. The observations and data on which this report is based were collected by Thomas E. Clark, Curator, and Nancy Weaver, Volunteer Coordinator and Plant Recorder.

The weather during 2013 can be characterized as having been generally warmer and drier than average. The lowest temperature recorded was 11 °F (–11.7 °C) on January 18 and 19, and the highest temperature recorded was 90 °F (32.2 °C) on July 16. Total precipitation was 3.89 in. (98.81 mm) below the annual average. June, July, and November were distinctly wetter than average, but several months (January through April and, most noticeably, September and October) were distinctly drier than we'd normally expect. Table 1 details the 2013 weather.

Table 1. Temperature and precipitation summaries for 2013

Month	Monthly mean temp.	Monthly precip.	departure from norm
January	34.9 °F (1.6 °C)	1.78" (45.21 mm)	–1.89" (–48.00 mm)
February	33.2 °F (0.7 °C)	2.32" (58.67 mm)	–1.81" (–45.97 mm)
March	38.3 °F (3.5 °C)	2.53" (64.26 mm)	–1.50" (–38.01 mm)
April	44.1 °F (6.7 °C)	1.50" (38.10 mm)	–2.78" (–70.61 mm)
May	57.4 °F (14.1 °C)	3.76" (95.50 mm)	–0.49" (–12.45 mm)
June	66.1 °F (18.9 °C)	6.81" (172.97 mm)	4.16" (105.66 mm)
July	74.6 °F (23.7 °C)	4.29" (108.97 mm)	1.66" (42.16 mm)
August	68.3 °F (20.2 °C)	4.82" (122.43 mm)	0.39" (9.91 mm)
September	62.3 °F (16.8 °C)	1.09" (27.69 mm)	–2.47" (–62.74 mm)
October	55.5 °F (13.1 °C)	1.16" (29.46 mm)	–2.23" (–56.64 mm)
November	44.4 °F (6.9 °C)	6.53" (165.86 mm)	2.13" (54.10 mm)
December	38.0 °F (3.3 °C)	3.33" (84.75 mm)	0.94" (23.88 mm)
2013 Totals		41.93" (1065.02 mm)	–3.89" (–98.81 mm)

Two new *Ilex* taxa were accessioned in 2013: *I. decidua* 'Finch's Golden' and *I. pedunculosa*. Six hollies (6 taxa) were removed from the grounds in 2013; all except *I. crenata* 'Tee Dee' are still represented in the collection. These plants were removed due to overcrowding, and/or poor performance.

Ilex performed generally quite well in 2013. Many clones of *I. opaca* performed exceptionally well and more than a few are among the mostly highly rated hollies for 2013. *Ilex opaca* cultivars of note for excellent performance and heavy fruit set include 'Martha's Vineyard', 'Miss Helen', 'St. Mary', and f. *xanthocarpa*. Damage to American hollies caused by holly berry midge (*Asphondylia ilicicola*) continues to be a sporadic problem. The clones 'Barnard Luce' and 'Greenhill' were, in general, heavily infested. Although fruit set was less than past years, *I. × altaclerensis* 'Camelliifolia' continues to be a splendid plant for its large, showy fruit and its lustrous, dark green foliage. *Ilex* 'Pernella' and *I. Aquifolium* 'Evangeline' also performed exceptionally well in 2013. Among the deciduous hollies, *I. serrata* grown from seed wild-collected in Japan in 2005 set remarkably heavy crops of fruit. The clones 'Harvest Red', 'Sparkleberry' and *I. decidua* 'Pocahontas' were also heavily fruited. The dry spell that extended from late August through early November undoubtedly had a negative impact on fruit development at maturation.

* indicates Polly Hill selections

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

2013 HSA Holly of the Year – *I. pedunculosa*

This taxon was added the collection this year but has yet to be planted in the collection, therefore an assessment of its performance at this time would be premature.

Thomas E. Clark, Collections & Grounds Manager