

U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM
Washington, DC USDA Hardiness Zone 7B

Again the first three months of the year were warmer and drier than normal. There were a little over 2 in. (5.1 cm) of snowfall for January and February. During one week in January we had lows in the upper teens (around -7.7°C); otherwise, the majority of the low temperatures were just below or above 32°F . (0°C) As we headed into spring, the temperatures remained above average and moisture was below average. Weather forecasts had predicted that we were going to continue in this pattern and they were correct. We had many days with temperatures in the upper 90°F (32.2°C) range. Most months were fairly dry except for the months of June and October when we received above average rainfall, but like the last several years, the rain fell during two or three days, not spread out through the month. As the year ended temperatures were about average with average rainfall. The majority of the *Ilex* were fruiting well by the end of November and persisted throughout midwinter. Hollies that performed well this past year were our *koehneana* and *attenuata* hybrids.

There were no additions to the collection this year and just a few removals. Our effort to propagate our wild-collected accessions continued throughout the year. In February, we collected 300 berries (30 berries from each plant) from our *I. opaca* holdings for Dr. Alain Roques of the Center of Research in Orleans, France. He is working on a research project on the parasitic seed feeding wasp, *Megastigmus floridanus*. This is follow-up research that was originally done in Beltsville, Maryland, in 1987, using funds from the Holly Society of America.

Our colleagues from the Chesapeake Chapter of the Holly Society volunteered their expertise and services during a work day in late November. They are a small but dedicated group who volunteer yearly and help with pruning. We get a lot of work done in a short amount of time and I am always grateful for their help.

As far as the HSA Holly of the Year, we currently have *I. opaca* 'Satyr Hill', *I. crenata* 'Sky Pencil', *I. × attenuata* 'Sunny Foster', *I.* 'Scepter', *I. verticillata* 'Red Sprite', *I. (cornuta × aquifolium)* 'Nellie R. Stevens', and *I. pedunculosa*. All of these are older plants and continue to do well despite our dry summers. We did see some winter burn on 'Sunny Foster' early last spring. The burn was from drying winds in late February after several months of below average moisture.

Carole Bordelon, Supervisory Horticulturist