

BERNHEIM ARBORETUM AND RESEARCH FOREST

Clermont, KY USDA Hardiness Zone 6a

The 2015 growing season was atypical when considering the unusually frigid winter and very mild summer we experienced. Our coldest temperature was a numbing $-15.8\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($-26.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$) while summer temps struggled to top $90\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($33.4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$). Our warmest day this summer was $92.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($32.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$). Precipitation was at $53''$ (135 cm) for the year. Although moisture was about normal and most of the holly collection responded well with new growth, many of our accessions did not survive the record cold temperatures. Losses among all hybrid hollies, *Ilex cornuta*, and *I. × koehneana* were greater than 80%. Most were killed down to the crown and may provide, at least, some material for cuttings. Most have been pruned down severely and we will give them a couple of years to respond before removal.

The *I. opaca* continue to do well. New growth was great as well as fruiting. A much needed pruning and sucker removal drastically improved the aesthetics of the collection. Lower limbs from these hollies had taken root and provided opportunity for profuse suckering among all the American hollies. Most held fruit well into February and were quite picturesque with the 2 large snows we experienced. Our aging *I. crenata* collection will be removed as accessions exceed maturity and begin to fail. Cuttings have been taken from the viable accessions for replanting in later years. There were no new additions to the Holly collection this year.

Many of the *Ilex* that we grow and test have performed tremendously for 10 or more years only to be bested by an erratic winter. We speak to garden groups, master gardeners, nursery professionals, and homeowners seeking advice throughout each season. There are hollies that we would have almost guaranteed to survive winters in Kentucky landscapes that faltered. No doubt, we will have quite a deaccession list next year.

In spring 2016, Bernheim will host Vanishing Acts: Trees Under Threat in conjunction with Morton Arboretum and The Global Trees Campaign. This exhibit will feature the plight of 15 rare and threatened species from all over the world. We are fortunate to have found 9 of these species to display here at the Arboretum. For more information, please visit our website: www.bernheim.org.

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