

SANDHILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE EBERSOLE HOLLY COLLECTION

Pinehurst, NC USDA Hardiness Zone 7b

In the beginning of 2015 we did not receive any substantial amounts of winter weather to negatively impact any plants in our collection. The spring and summer seasons produced normal amounts of rain. The summer season this year was not as hot as some previous years. However, the weather did seem to stay warmer all the way through to the end of the year. The early days of October brought significant amounts of rain but did not harm our collection. This is when the historic flooding occurred in South Carolina. There were a few cold days in late November and mid December. However, that cold weather did not stick around for a long time. December this year had fairly warm temperatures for the majority of the month ranging from about 50 to 70 °F (10 to 21 °C).

This year only three hollies were removed from the collection and, interestingly, they are all Japanese hollies. This area of the collection sits fairly close to our native wetland area of the garden, at the bottom of the hill, under the canopy of much larger and older trees. I think this location has much to do with the struggle of these hollies in the collection. We lost *Ilex crenata* 'Green Dragon', 'Mariessii', and 'Border Gem'.

Holly of the Year: *I. opaca* 'Maryland Dwarf' – These are great looking and very strong hollies here in our collection. We have four of them planted in very near each other. They were planted 36 years ago and have really performed well in our garden. The spread on these plants is truly amazing since they cover such a very large area.

I. dimorphophylla × *cornuta* 'Carolina Cone' – Even though the overall condition of this holly is not perfect it really is a gem. In the springtime the flowers are thick and fragrant, making this a very special specimen to have in our collection.

I. opaca 'Clarendon Spreading' – We have two of these hollies in our gardens and they really perform well and look great. They are fairly large rounded hollies with about a 12' spread. It definitely lives up to its name.

Our collection here at Sandhills Community College is still doing well. For 2016, we plan to take advantage of propagation to start getting clones of these special plants. We have also started a project to rebuild an old brick walkway in the garden that had been damaged over the years and look forward to completing that in the spring and summer of 2016.

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