

## U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

3501 New York Avenue, NE Washington, DC USDA Hardiness Zone 7b

During the first two months of 2016 we had average temperatures and moisture. We had two snow events, the “big one” at the end of January, which resulted in 29” (73.6 cm) of snow. Starting in March and continuing through April we had above average temperatures and below average moisture. May and June were fairly normal, but we did have several days above 90 °F (32.2 °C) in May and five or six days in June. July continued to be warmer than average with 23 nights that didn’t fall below 76 °F (24.4 °C). We did have average rainfall but most of it fell in two or three storms. We still had temperatures in the 90 °F (32 °C) range during August and September, with above average moisture. October and November proved to be very dry and warmer than average. In December we received above average rainfall, which helped alleviate some of the stress from the fall “drought.”

The collection did fairly well this year, and during the dry months we supplemented with irrigation. The deciduous hollies put on a good show in the fall with *Ilex verticillata* ‘Winter Red’ leading the pack.

Maintenance of the collection focused on the removal of invasive vines and shrubs in the hollies and on the wood edges. The Holly/Magnolia collection and the adjoining Flowering Tree Collection will be the site for the International Tree Climbing Championship hosted by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) from July 28 to 30. This event will be open to the public and will include an arbor fair.

The Chesapeake Chapter of the HSA returned in November for their annual workday. Although there were only a handful of volunteers, they consistently amaze me with the amount of work they can accomplish in a few hours.

The current status and performance throughout the year of our Holly of the Year plants:

*I. opaca* ‘Satyr Hill’ – two plants on the grounds, both in good health and performed well throughout the year

*I. crenata* ‘Sky Pencil’ – several plants in various locations; best performer receive adequate moisture during the growing season

*I. × koehneana* ‘Lassie’ – planted out in spring, 2015, and is doing okay

*I. × attenuata* ‘Sunny Foster’ – several plants, all do well in our area; tolerant of heat and dry periods

*I. aquifolium* ‘Lewis’ – planted out last spring and died in the fall

*I. verticillata* ‘Maryland Beauty’ – planted out in spring, 2015, and is doing well

*I.* ‘Scepter’ – several plants on the grounds, performed well during the last year

*I. verticillata* ‘Red Sprite’ – several plants on the grounds; good performer; fruit drop by early February

*I. (cornuta × aquifolium)* ‘Nellie R. Stevens’ – our first ‘Nellie Stevens’ at least 20’ (6.0 m) tall; always a good performer

*I. aquifolium* ‘Proud Mary’ – new plant; still in greenhouse; should be planted out in spring, 2017

*I. pedunculosa* – several accessions on the grounds; most wild-collected; perform fairly well here; need adequate moisture during hot spells and protection from wind in the winter months

*I. × meserveae* ‘Mesgol’ Golden Girl™ – not represented in our holdings

*I. crenata* ‘Helleri’ – many specimens in our Japanese Stroll Garden; tend to get root rot in our heavy soils

*I. opaca* ‘Maryland Dwarf’ – several plants in the Holly Collection; do well as all our *opacas*; doesn’t produce as many berries as larger *opacas*.

Carole Bordelon, Supervisory Horticulturist

[Carole.Bordelon@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Carole.Bordelon@ars.usda.gov) 202-245-5964

<http://www.usna.usda.gov>