

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE ARBORETUM

Oak Ridge, TN USDA Hardiness Zone 7a–6b

Extreme summer temperatures in 2016 were devastating for hollies in the Elmore Holly Collection. Many young hollies planted in fall 2015 did not survive the high temperatures and drought in East Tennessee. An extended severe 2016 fall drought was felt throughout the East Tennessee region, enabling major wildfires to impact the area, including over 1000 acres (405 hectares) of the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center (FRREC) land base in Morgan and Scott counties. The Arboretum only received approximately one-tenth of an inch (0.25 cm) of rainfall from early September through mid-November. Fran Scheidt, founding member of the Holly Task Force maintains a detailed ledger of the lost and damaged *Ilex* species. This list will be beneficial to homeowners and landscapers when selecting the holly variety to plant in the East Tennessee landscape. The holly collection does not currently have water line access, intensifying the problem during drought conditions. Arboretum Director Kevin Hoyt has a proposed project for installing a water line and electricity to the Elmore Holly Collection pending future UT Arboretum Society (UTAS) donations and internal deferred maintenance budget funding.

The Holly Task Force with 16 volunteers met on October 22 for the semiannual holly work day. The primary task was to mulch a single large bed of similar holly varieties. The area was outlined and sprayed with herbicide in advance by Holly Task Force Leaders and UT Arboretum Staff. Recycled newspapers were then laid as a weed barrier along with a heavy layer of hardwood mulch spread across the entire area. The advantage will be to significantly ease the maintenance of signage and mowing. As the collection matures, lower holly branches cover the ground. The tractor while mowing was damaging identification posts that were hidden out of sight of the branches. The enlarged mulch bed allowed for the posts to be moved away from the individual holly specimens by the FRREC staff this past winter. The project will ultimately help to prevent mower damage to the hollies, aid in plant moisture retention, and inhibit weed growth for ease of future maintenance. A spring 2017 holly work day is scheduled for April 1, concentrating on fertilizing young hollies and establishing another large mulched area.

The UT FRREC staff installed several signs at the beginning of the Heath Cove Trail to bring more attention to potential access points to the Harold Elmore Holly collection. A new Eagle Scout bridge project was also installed on the terminus of the trail, which will be used for the start of

the “future-planned” mulch trail up through the western side of the collection.

The Holly Society of America members of the Southeastern Region were extended an invitation to meet at the University of Tennessee Auditorium located in the UT Arboretum on January 14, 2017. The Elmore Holly Collection Task Force hosted this inaugural meeting of the Southeastern Region of The Holly Society of America. The idea of a region vs. chapters was introduced, followed by discussion. The Southeastern Region consists of members residing in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The UT Arboretum was chosen as a meeting site because of its central proximity to two active chapters: the South-Central and Harry Logan of the Carolinas chapters. The new auditorium facility in the UT Arboretum provided an excellent meeting venue with its presentation facilities and warm wood burning natural fire place.

The UT Arboretum Holly Task Force will continue to focus on the following long-term goals:

Replacing, moving and adding holly collection markers and labels to selected specimens, which may include enlarging and combining specimens into expanded “mulched” perimeter areas

Securing funding to redesign and reprint the Elmore Holly Collection brochure

Building a trail extension through the American Holly Collection from the Heath Cove Trail to the main access road with natural mulch materials

Completing an onsite re-inspection and inventory of the collection, focusing on plant vigor, signage, labeling, spacing requirements, rouging out dead plants, and more

Securing funding from the UT Arboretum Society and other donors for the completion of the Harold Elmore Holly Collection stone entrance

The Holly Task Force is a support team for the University of Tennessee Arboretum Society consisting of the following members:

Dennis Superczynski, Chair; Carmen Gianforte; Josie Gianforte; Fran Scheidt; Mike Stansberry; Jan Superczynski; Dr. Will Witte

The UT Arboretum Society (<http://utarboretumsociety.org>) and the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center will continue to emphasize outreach, programming and membership development during 2017. For more information on our programs and collections please visit the Arboretum webpage (<http://utarboretum.tennessee.edu/index.html>).

For more information about the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center please visit <http://forestry.tennessee.edu>.

Dennis Superczynski, UT Holly Task Force Chair

Kevin P. Hoyt, Director, Director, UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center



New Trail Bridge at University of Tennessee Arboretum, Oak Ridge, TN.