

## BERNHEIM ARBORETUM AND RESEARCH FOREST

Clermont, KY USDA Hardiness Zone 6a

This past year our growing season was outstanding, with near normal temperatures and rainfall overall. Our total precipitation for 2017 was 53.04" (134.7cm), which is well within our normal range. October, historically one of our driest months, provided over 8" (20.3 cm) of rain to the plant collections. November and December were our driest, with just a little over one inch (2.5cm) of precipitation each month. Temperatures stayed moderate throughout the year with no extremes. Our coldest recorded temperature was in January at  $-0.3^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-17^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and our highest at a modest  $94^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $34.4^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in July.

The Holly Collection had no deaccessions for the year, and growth after some significant pruning in our collection was outstanding. Fruiting among all specimens was heavy, with ample sunny and dry days during flowering, which allowed the pollinators many opportunities to work the blooms.

Jim Resch has provided us with two plants that are currently growing in the nursery, but will move into the collection next season provided they have reached good size: *I. dimorphophylla*  $\times$  *cornuta* 'Carolina Cone' and *I.* 'Homefire'. Many thanks to Jim. We are eager to re-introduce 'Carolina Cone' into our collection. Our previous accessions of this plant were added in 2005. They received severe freeze damage and were cut back, but produced only inconsistent and erratic suckering from the crown. They never fruited, but bloomed once, before being removed, one in 2007 and the other in 2009. We are hoping that different siting of this variety will allow it to grow well for us. In addition, we are excited to add the 2017 test holly, *I.* 'Homefire', which was described by Dr. Resch as a "handsome" hybrid, to the collection this year.

Our American holly grove is located adjacent to a 32-acre (13 hectare) prairie of native warm season grasses and forbs. This attracts a great variety of bird species into the collection that may normally not visit, and has become a popular spot for birders hoping to catch a glimpse of an occasional Oriole or the many species of sparrow that make a stop there. Robins are never a rarity, overtaking the grove by the hundreds in the late winter months. They are a lively bunch that gets comically rowdy as they get their fill of berries.

We removed fourteen mature Callery Pears of many varieties this year, as they have become a problem throughout the years for their invasiveness.

This afforded us a great opportunity in the arboretum to add over 50 flowering cherries in the space the pears once occupied. Bordering our prairie, this is sure to add a beautiful blast of color to our spring season as they mature. We also added to our Ginkgo collection with three new varieties, all of which are narrowly pyramidal and fastigate. We added an additional twenty Black Gums (*Nyssa sylvatica*) to the arboretum, from 6 varieties, one being the contorted 'Zydeco Twist'.

Soon we will be gearing up to celebrate Bernheim's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Purchased by German immigrant Isaac W. Bernheim in 1929, the land was dedicated as a gift to the people of his new homeland. Today, over 250,000 visitors from the U.S. and abroad visit Bernheim each year. Please check us out at [www.bernheim.org](http://www.bernheim.org). to learn more about events, programming, and to plan your visit. Wishes for a great growing year!

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