

U. S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

Washington, DC USDA. Hardiness Zone 7b

The DC area continued to have warmer and dryer than usual weather in 2017. January and February were mild with average highs around 50 °F (10° C) and lows around 34 °F (1.11 °C) with only a ½" (1.27 cm) of snow in January and just a few nights in the teens (15.8 °F [-9° C] average) in January. February was very dry. We had less than a ½" (1.27 cm) of moisture for the whole month. In March, we continued our dry pattern, but did get 2 ½" (6.35 cm) of snow in the middle of the month and a week of lows ranging from 22 °F (-5.5 °C) to 27 °F (-2.77° C) during the middle of the month after many of the plants had become accustomed to the warm temperatures. This cold snap caused damage to many of our plants, especially the early flowering trees. The months of April and May were warm with normal rainfall amounts. In May we had about 7" (17.78 cm) of rain that fell in two storms. The summer months continued to be warm and dry except for the month of July when we had 10.5" (26.67 cm) of rain with 5" (12.7 cm) falling on one day. The average temperatures during the fall were above average with a streak of above 90 °F (32.2° C) for five days at the end of September. October, November and December were warm and dry.

Despite the weather, the collection did fairly well. The effort to remove vines and invasive plants the previous year and during the spring to prepare for the Tree Climbing event was a big improvement to the collection.

We received cultivars of *Ilex opaca*, *aquifolium* and × *altacrerensis* from the Morris Arboretum in early 2017 after their recent renovation of their "Holly Slope". Many of the cultivars are no longer represented in the nursery trade or in our collections. They are slated to be planted in 2018. In addition, we propagated and planted our underrepresented introductions such as 'Venus' and 'Tanager' to preserve the germplasm.

Holly of the Year plants:

I. opaca 'Satyr Hill' – Two plants on the grounds, both are in good health and performed well throughout the year.

I. crenata 'Sky Pencil' – Several plants in various locations. The ones that perform best 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’ – No longer represented, died in 2016.

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

I. ‘Scepter’ – Several plants on the grounds. The largest one that was transplanted from the nursery field in 1999 was removed this year. It had been unhealthy for several years. The others are doing fine.

I. verticillata ‘Red Sprite’ – Several plants on the grounds. Good performer, fruit drop by early February.

I. (cornuta × aquifolium) ‘Nellie R. Stevens’ – Our original ‘Nellie Stevens’ is at least 20 feet tall and is always a good performer.

I. aquifolium ‘Proud Mary’ – Planted in spring of 2017 and died in the fall.

I. pedunculosa – Several accessions on the grounds. Most are wild-collected. Perform fairly well in our area, but need adequate moisture during hot spells and protection from wind in the winter months.

I. × meserveae ‘Mesgolg’ Golden Girl’™ – Currently not represented; had several plants in the past that died.

I. crenata ‘Helleri’ – Many plants of this in our Japanese Stroll Garden. Tend to get root rot in our heavy soils.

I. opaca ‘Maryland Dwarf’ – We have several plants in the Holly Collection that are doing well. This cultivar doesn’t produce many berries for us.

I. glabra – We have several accessions of inkberry in the collections and on the grounds. All perform well in the DC region. In addition, we have several cultivars, including ‘Gold Mine’.

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