

## UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE BOTANIC GARDENS

Newark, DE. USDA Hardiness Zone 7a

This past year saw only additions to the University of Delaware Botanic Gardens (UDBG) *Ilex* collection, with no removals or deletions. We added 6 new plants to the collection, increasing total accessions to 255. The new taxa are: *Ilex pedunculosa*, *I. pedunculosa* 'Frosty Morn' and *I. opaca* 'Satyr Hill'.

The weather this past year may have contributed to the excellent performance of the *Ilex*. The maximum high temperature for the year was 93 °F (33.9 °C), that occurred June 20, and approached that maximum several times. The average high during the summer months was 87.2 °F (30.7 °C). The low occurred in December reaching 7.2 °F (-13.8 °C). The average low during the winter was 15.5 °F (-9.2 °C). The average temperature for the entire year was 55.9 °F (13.3 °C). Overall, it was a fairly warm year for this area. Precipitation was average as well, totaling 43.07" (109.4 cm). No significant snow events occurred this year, but we had a few storms with snow totals of no more than 3" (7.62 cm) at a time.

There was a significant ice storm during the middle of March where 0.2" (0.51 cm) of ice accumulated. A few hollies lost some minor branches, mostly secondary and tertiary branches.

Two *Ilex* performed particularly well this year, and were featured in our fall and winter wreath making classes. *I. aquifolium* 'Argenteo-marginata' was a particular winner with our volunteer group this year. Its variegated foliage and fruit set made it a common pick to be included in winter wreathes. *I. verticillata* 'Winter Gold' had a wonderful orange fruit set that was particularly robust. The orange berries worked well with our fall wreath making workshop we had held late this year!

The soil at UDBG has a big impact on the performance of hollies. Our soil is classified as a clay-loam, with an organic matter content approximately 4.5%. The pH ranges from 6.2 to 6.8. Plants in the collection are not fertilized but surrounding turf areas are minimally fertilized. Turf fertilization is very low in phosphorus because of the land's history of farming. The soil contains naturally high levels of phosphorus. Potassium levels are within recommended ranges, so turf fertilizer is only nitrogen.

Please stop by the gardens this year to see our many new looks! We are rejuvenating the front of our Clark Garden that runs along the highway, giving a new face to the garden, opening up vistas, and adding an herbaceous understory with beautiful color. We also have a new set of

plants going in our Trial Gardens, which always look great throughout the summer and into the fall.

Andrew Adams, University of Delaware Botanic Gardens  
Horticulture Manager, University of Delaware Class of 2017