

Japanese Holly (*Ilex crenata*)

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Summary:

Foliage: Evergreen broadleaf

Height: 2 to 10 feet (depending on cultivar)

Spread: 2 to 10 feet (depending on cultivar)

Shape: Upright or low mound (depending on cultivar)

There are numerous cultivars of Japanese holly. Many are compact, mounded forms with small, spineless, dark-green leaves and black fruit. They are primarily used in mass for borders, backgrounds, and foundation plants.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 6b to 8 (most, there are a few 6a cultivars)

Light: Partial shade to full sun

Moisture: Moist to dry

Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

pH Range: 3.7 to 6.8

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include border, foundation, hedge and massing.

Planting Notes:

Make sure the cultivar you have selected is cold hardy in your area.

Care:

Tolerates severe pruning.

Mulch to protect tender roots from freezing injury.

Problems:

Damage to plant from spider mites in hot, dry locations can be serious.

Scale and nematodes are a problem in sandy soils.

Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Cultivars of *Ilex crenata*:

'Convexa' has dark-green, convex leaves. One of the hardiest forms, but is a heavy fruit producer. May reach 9 feet tall and 24 feet wide.

'Helleri' is a compact form that reaches 4 feet at maturity.

'Hetzii' a dwarf form of 'Convexa'. Grows 8+ feet in height.

'Roundleaf' is a male selection that does not produce berries. It is more subject to winter injury. Will grow 5 to 10 feet tall and 5 to 12 feet wide.

'Soft Touch' forms a 3 foot tall mound with pliable branches.

There are over 60 cultivars of Japanese holly with variations in size, form, & foliage characteristics.

Comments:

Japanese holly is a versatile evergreen shrub with varied uses depending on the cultivar.

Select cultivar with a mature height and cold hardiness that is appropriate to location to avoid the need for frequent pruning and low temperature damage, respectively.

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