

Foster's Holly

Ilex attenuata



Hybrid between *Ilex opaca* and *Ilex cassine*. Persistent red fruit is bright against the glossy, dark green leaves of this slender, conical shrub, making it a nice decorative screen. Leaves are 1 to 3 inches long, elliptic to oblong-ovate, and are less spiny than classic hollies. Needs rich, slightly acidic garden soil and good drainage.

How to Grow this Plant:

Characteristics

Cultivar: n/a

Family: Aquifoliaceae

Size: Height: 20 ft. to 30 ft.

Width: 10 ft. to 20 ft.

Plant Category: landscape, shrubs, trees,

Plant Characteristics: decorative berries or fruit, low maintenance, poisonous,

Foliage Characteristics: small leaves, evergreen,

Foliage Color: dark green,

Flower Characteristics:

Flower Color: whites,

Tolerances: deer, drought, heat & humidity, seashore, slope, wind,

Requirements

Bloomtime Range: Late Spring to Early Summer

USDA Hardiness Zone: 6 to 9

AHS Heat Zone: Not defined for this plant

Light Range: Part Shade to Full Sun

pH Range: 5 to 7.5

Soil Range: Mostly Sand to Mostly Clay

Water Range: Dry to Moist

Plant Care

Fertilizing

How-tos : Fertilization for Established Plants

Established plants can benefit from fertilization. Take a visual inventory of your landscape. Trees need to be fertilized every few years. Shrubs and other plants in the landscape can be fertilized yearly. A soil test can determine existing nutrient levels in the soil. If one or more nutrients is low, a specific instead of an all-purpose fertilizer may be required. Fertilizers that are high in N, nitrogen, will promote green leafy growth. Excess nitrogen in the soil can cause excessive vegetative growth on plants at the expense of flower bud development. It is best to avoid fertilizing late in the growing season. Applications made at that time can force lush, vegetative growth that will not have a chance to harden off before the onset of cold weather.

Light

Conditions : Sun

Sun is defined as the continuous, direct, exposure to 6 hours (or more) of sunlight per day.

Conditions : Light Conditions

Unless a site is completely exposed, light conditions will change during the day and even during the year. The northern and eastern sides of a house receive the least amount of light, with the northern exposure being the shadiest. The western and southern sides of a house receive the most light and are considered the hottest exposures due to intense afternoon sun.

You will notice that sun and shade patterns change during the day. The western side of a house may even be shady due to shadows cast by large trees or a structure from an adjacent property. If you have just bought a new home or just beginning to garden in your older home, take time to map sun and shade throughout the day. You will get a

more accurate feel for your site's true light conditions.

Conditions : Full to Partial Sun

Full sunlight is needed for many plants to assume their full potential. Many of these plants will do fine with a little less sunlight, although they may not flower as heavily or their foliage as vibrant. Areas on the southern and western sides of buildings usually are the sunniest. The only exception is when houses or buildings are so close together, shadows are cast from neighboring properties. Full sun usually means 6 or more hours of direct unobstructed sunlight on a sunny day. Partial sun receives less than 6 hours of sun, but more than 3 hours. Plants able to take full sun in some climates may only be able to tolerate part sun in other climates. Know the culture of the plant before you buy and plant it!

Conditions : Types of Pruning

Types of pruning include: pinching, thinning, shearing and rejuvenating.

Pinching is removing the stem tips of a young plant to promote branching. Doing this avoids the need for more severe pruning later on.

Thinning involves removing whole branches back to the trunk. This may be done to open up the interior of a plant to let more light in and to increase air circulation that can cut down on plant disease. The best way to begin thinning is to begin by removing dead or diseased wood.

Shearing is leveling the surface of a shrub using hand or electric shears. This is done to maintain the desired shape of a hedge or topiary.

Rejuvenating is removal of old branches or the overall reduction of the size of a shrub to restore its original form and size. It is recommended that you do not remove more than one third of a plant at a time. Remember to remove branches from the inside of the plant as well as the outside. When rejuvenating plants with canes, such as nandina, cut back canes at various heights so that plant will have a more natural look.

Conditions : Light and Plant Selection

For best plant performance, it is desirable to match the correct plant with the available light conditions. Right plant, right place! Plants which do not receive sufficient light may become pale in color, have fewer leaves and a "leggy" stretched-out appearance. Also expect plants to grow slower and have fewer blooms when light is less than desirable. It is possible to provide supplemental lighting for indoor plants with lamps. Plants can also receive too much light. If a shade loving plant is exposed to direct sun, it may wilt and/or cause leaves to be sunburned or otherwise damaged.

Conditions : Full Sun

Full Sun is defined as exposure to more than 6 hours of continuous, direct sun per day.

Watering

Conditions : Regular Moisture for Outdoor Plants

Water when normal rainfall does not provide the preferred 1 inch of moisture most plants prefer. Average water is needed during the growing season, but take care not to overwater. The first two years after a plant is installed, regular watering is important. The first year is critical. It is better to water once a week and water deeply, than to water frequently for a few minutes.

Conditions : Outdoor Watering

Plants are almost completely made up of water so it is important to supply them with adequate water to maintain good plant health. Not enough water and roots will wither and the plant will wilt and die. Too much water applied too frequently deprives roots of oxygen leading to plant diseases such as root and stem rots. The type of plant, plant age, light level, soil type and container size all will impact when a plant needs to be watered. Follow these tips to ensure successful watering:

- * The key to watering is water deeply and less frequently. When watering, water well, i.e. provide enough water to thoroughly saturate the root ball. With in-ground plants, this means thoroughly soaking the soil until water has penetrated to a depth of 6 to 7 inches (1' being better). With container grown plants, apply enough water to allow water to flow through the drainage holes.
- * Try to water plants early in the day or later in the afternoon to conserve water and cut down on plant stress. Do water early enough so that water has had a chance to dry from plant leaves prior to night fall. This is paramount if you have had fungus problems.
- * Don't wait to water until plants wilt. Although some plants will recover from this, all plants will die if they wilt too much (when they reach the permanent wilting point).
- * Consider water conservation methods such as drip irrigation, mulching, and xeriscaping. Drip systems which slowly drip moisture directly on the root system can be purchased at your local home and garden center. Mulches can significantly cool the root zone and conserve moisture.
- * Consider adding water-saving gels to the root zone which will hold a reserve of water for the plant. These can make a world of difference especially under stressful conditions. Be certain to follow label directions for their use.

Conditions : Normal Watering for Outdoor Plants

Normal watering means that soil should be kept evenly moist and watered regularly, as conditions require. Most plants like 1 inch of water a week during the growing season, but take care not to over water. The first two years after a plant is installed, regular watering is important for establishment. The first year is critical. It is better to water once a week and water deeply, than to water frequently for a few minutes.