

January 3, 1944

A Happy New Year, if such is possible in all this horror of war. Perhaps there is some measure of happiness in some of the things which are of promise in the world, and I suppose we must dwell on them.

The package of branches you sent to me evidently was side-tracked; for when I received it, the branches were so dried up, all the fruit had fallen off and the leaves were yellow.

The yellowing of holly foliage is, I think, a deficiency in the soil which can be overcome by the proper feeding. I gave a friend some holly branches a week before Christmas and met him yesterday. He said, "I wish you could see those holly branches now. You would not know them; they are greener and brighter than when you gave them to me." He added copper filings to the water in which he placed the branches and almost immediately the leaves turned darker and the berries brighter. While I know nothing about this, there may be something to it. You might try "Vigoro" on the plants in the nursery and see what happens. I understand there is some copper in "Vigoro".

The best-colored hollies here are those being fed with old cow manure; this, apparently, is a great help in foliage color. Some of the trees in the woods which have been fed with poultry manure, are showing far better color.

There is a lot to learn about rooting hollies. I am of the opinion that summer rooting of quite soft wood is a possibility. I saw evidence at a Long Island nursery that summer cuttings had been taken with a heel from the main stem; that is, there were a lot of cuts made in the old trees, but the nurseryman would not tell me anything about this.

Wilfred Wheeler

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January 14, 1944

Your suggestion of using copper in connection with the fertilizer is very interesting. I shall try to experiment with it next summer.

A few days ago I had a very interesting letter from Ben Blackburn who has done some work with holly. He was with the Extension Department of Rutgers University before he was inducted into the Army. For more than a year he has been engaged in camouflage work in the vicinity of Boston which taken him down the Cape Cod canal. I am going to give him your name in the hope he may be able to call on you, because he would be extremely interested in your work with holly.

Wilfred Wheeler

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February 21, 1944

I hope the war will be over soon, for at the rate the Army is destroying the woodlands in this area, there will not be much left. The Army cut hollies to put over trucks in war games, when there are many pines they could have used. I never thought it could be possible to destroy so much so quickly. I almost have to stand guard to keep them out of my place.

My rooted cuttings are better than last year. I have some varieties which rooted about 90%, and that is very good for me. I now realize that it will be necessary to build the proper kind of propagating house; I have an idea it need not be too expensive, for it could be mostly underground so that the heat could be conserved and applied at the proper place.

The young plants I put in last year are looking well, and I am planning on setting out about 300 permanent plants in the woods this spring.

Wilfred Wheeler

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