

The cutting back of the bunching-type holly will afford the best means of securing cutting wood, though there is not likely to be a great deal the first year.

The first ten days have been quite cool here, not enough to damage the blueberries and the outdoor holly has not started sufficiently to be injured by a hard frost. I am always glad to have spring a little late, for there is less probability of the new growth being hurt.

Elizabeth C. White

August 4, 1942

I planted the hollies that you sent to me and find that most of them are doing well, but the following will give you a correct picture of them:

"Osa" lost no foliage and is looking splendidly. "Maning" is almost the same; in fact, this one has some fruit. "Clark" lost most of its foliage, but has leafed out. "Griscom" does not look so well; but some of the plants are starting from the bottom. "Farage" is splendid; it lost no foliage and has grown six inches. Two plants of "Joyce" look badly, but the rest are fine. "Laura" lost the foliage, but three of the plants are coming along well now.

I feel sure there is great difference in the recovery power of certain strains, and this may be in ratio to the rooting power. I do think, however, that more attention should be given to the transplanting value of a variety, since this would be of much importance in shipping.

There is quite a joke about the "males" you sent to me. Three which I kept have a nice crop of fruit; these were handled two or three times before being set permanently, yet they never lost a leaf and bloomed and set fruit. I used a couple of them in some settings I made and will have to change them in the fall.

I recall that you thought it would be difficult to get cuttings from a type such as that pictured in Horticulture which has so much fruit on it. I cut the tree back very hard and have a splendid crop of new wood. Also on some cuttings I have made of this variety, there are bunches of berries almost as large as those on the original tree.

I rooted about 100 of the I. altaclarensis cuttings which I got from Long Island. As this holly is a fast grower, I feel it is going to be a fine one for Christmas.

My young plants which set this season are growing wonderfully, and I now have over 1,000 cuttings and grafts.

I have not been in the woods much, so do not know how the wild hollies have set fruit. My own are very shy of fruit. How are your plants? The awful war is, I am afraid, going to ruin the business, though I have received many letters from interested people.

John Wister is getting some hollies for the campus of Swarthmore College; some, he wrote, from you. I think it is a fine idea to establish a collection in one place so that holly will be preserved for the future.

Wilfred Wheeler

August 25, 1942

I have realized for the past ten years that the transplanting quality of any strain of holly is of the utmost importance, but it is one of the qualities which take so long to be sure of. I have known for some years that "Clark" can be moved with comparative ease. "Osa" is a much newer selection; I have the impression that it may prove a finer hedge variety than "Clark", but your report is the first I have had as to its transplanting quality. I am glad to have my favorable impression confirmed. I have had considerable experience with "Farage", and it is all good. The only fairly large tree at Whitesbog is a "Farage", and it is always loaded with berries.

I have found "Farage" to be a good mover.

Even my limited experience with "Manig" leads me to believe that it is one of our best varieties. I am so pleased that it has done well with you.

I believe that the difference in transplanting quality is largely connected with the type of root growth. Just as some strains of holly have rangy, loose-growing branches and others have compact tops, so the roots of some are long and stringy while others have compact root systems. The latter, of course, make the plants much easier to move.

I have not had much experience in moving "Joyce", but the plant is the most rangy and rapid-growing in the nursery, and it may well be that the roots are of the same type. I did not see the original tree of "Joyce"; but Tom Windon, who found it in a holly swamp, was very enthusiastic about its size and beauty. The original, Tom told me, was cut to the ground a few years ago to get branches for sale at Christmas.

In the nursery the "Griscom" holly grows somewhat like the "Joyce", but not so much so. I am afraid that it is not going to be one of the easiest types to handle after it grows too large for pots.

It is pleasant that you can take the big crops of berries on the "male" hollies we furnished as a joke. I am embarrassed that this happened. It seems probable that our men made a mistake in the digging or that some mistake was made further back with the cuttings or little plants. I find it very difficult to obtain the accuracy I desire in the nursery work.

There is another possibility, however, with these so-called male hollies. We have had cuttings from plants, which we knew to carry principally male flowers, set berries in the greenhouse bench; and there is always a sprinkling of berries on the definitely male hollies in the nursery. Most of our male hollies are in a separate

block to avoid just such a mix-up as happened in the shipment to you. Yesterday I examined these carefully; a few plants in a row of males, where the foliage seems to match perfectly, have good crops of berries. I am inclined to think that some strains of holly may be easily subject to bud variation from male to female or even that the flower buds may develop differently in different weather conditions or other environmental factors.

The above sounds "crazy", and is very difficult to prove under the conditions with which I am working. I write it not as an excuse for sending the berry-bearing male plants, but to start your thoughts and observations in this direction. I believe that there are many strains of holly not subject to the variations I suspect in others and that these will always be more valuable for horticultural purposes.

Elizabeth C. White

* * * * *

August 29, 1942

I am sure, as you say, that a sprawly tree will have the same kind of roots. Also I have found, when taking hollies from the woods, that the soil has a good deal to do with the root growth. The ground in one place where I get hollies is somewhat stoney, and I have to dig around the tree, remove the stones, and let the tree reroot in the new soil before moving it.

In the Country Gentleman, there is an item about a new holly called "Firecracker". Evidently, the person who found it does not know that hollies often carry their fruit through the next summer. "St. Mary" always does this and is often as red on the Fourth of July as at Christmas. Some one no doubt will make a big story about this and try to fool the public again. I wrote to Ries, who is responsible for this column, and told him that he ought to know better than to start anything like this.

I suppose you have heard from John Wister about the hollies for Swarthmore. I am sending him a few which I am sure will do well there. I have several hundreds of

some fine strains which I was able to have grafted in a Connecticut greenhouse. While I am not interested in grafting as a rule, I must say that these plants are more than twice as large as any of the cuttings. Of course, they will have to be watched for suckers from the roots. I have named one of the varieties "Emily" - this is one that bunches so heavily. I have the old tree well cut back so that I shall get quite a few cuttings from it this fall. There does not seem to be a large crop of fruit this fall, though some of the trees are well loaded.

As for the males, I wish that some one would do some research on this problem, for it does not seem possible that pollen could travel as far as a mile, as I know it must, in order to fertilize some isolated trees.

Batchelor has gone into the Army, so we shall not have his scouting work to look to any more.

Wilfred Wheeler

September 11, 1942

I do not regularly see the Country Gentleman, but a tear sheet of the article on the "Firecracker" holly was sent to me by Mr. Nicholson. Several persons connected with the Curtis Publishing Co. were here preliminary to the printing of this article, Mr. Nicholson among them; otherwise, I probably would have missed the holly article.

I have had some correspondence with Wyman S. Smith of the U.S.D.A., who is responsible for the publicity about this holly. He has given me accurate directions to find the tree, if I drive; but that is out of the question with the present rubber situation. I have written him that I should be glad to try cuttings from the tree, but that it would be of no value to me unless, in addition to carrying its berries two summers, it also has extra fine foliage, the quality of making neat nursery plants without a great amount of pruning or other attention, and the quality of being moved with comparative ease. I further told him that it would take from eight to ten years to prove its value compared with other strains of holly in the nursery.

Yesterday I checked carefully the plants grown from the cuttings you sent to me; from the 1940 cuttings, there are 75 plants of "St. Mary", 5 of "St. Ann", and 50 of "Allen"; Wheeler #1, 30 and Wheeler #2, 75. From the cuttings sent last fall, we obtained very few plants and they are still weak and small. The numbers are as follows: "Laura Thomas", 25; "Quinn", 35; "St. Mary", 14; "St. Ann", 7; "Helen Makepeace", 1; and "Dorothy", 16.

You may recall that I brought the cuttings of "Dorothy" back with me; they were set on October 21st. The others were not received until after the middle of November, and this late start is a great handicap in getting cuttings started. We usually get the best results with cuttings which are made in September or even the latter part of August.

We had a remarkably fine stand from our own cuttings which were set during September. There is great difference among the different strains of holly in this respect. When our holly house was burned after Christmas 1935, we put in cuttings in January 1936 from a few good trees we had marked. From one lot of these cuttings, we obtained very good results, and so far the resulting plants have all been marked January 1936. The older plants are now three to four feet high, and among the best eight or nine varieties we have of that size.

The plants from the cuttings you sent me in 1940 are mostly about one foot high. Those of "St. Mary" have especially beautiful glossy foliage. The plants of Wheeler #2 have quite a sprinkling of berries. The "Griseom" plants of the same age are heavily buried.

The crop of berries on the nursery plants is very irregular, some plants in a row of the same variety being heavily berried and others bearing few or no berries. As the holly nursery is located on an old cranberry bog, the small plants are more likely to have the blossoms injured by frost than if I were able to have them on higher ground. As an offset to this disadvantage, they make excellent growth; in fact, they have grown so fast this summer, that it is really embarrassing when we

have no present and assured market.

If you care to have me try cuttings of the new hollies you have selected, I suggest that they be sent as soon as possible. They should have an extra amount of wet moss about them and extra heavy wrappings of wax paper to compensate for what will probably be a slower journey.

Elizabeth C. White

October 20, 1942

We have practically all the holly cuttings that we shall make this year, unless something special turns up. I believe, however, that I shall take the tops off of approximately 75 "St. Mary" plants and make them into cuttings. I can probably get another 100 plants that way, even though it will delay the development of those I have.

Elizabeth C. White

October 25, 1942

Like many farmers, I am beginning to question the value of running a farm without sufficient help and will no doubt have to curb my efforts to a minimum next season. It makes me feel that I am not doing my share in the war effort, but at my age I cannot do the hard work I used to do. All this seems to curb my activities with other things, such as holly, and I cannot look over the country as formerly. I have heard of new hollies near Rochester, but I am afraid I shall have to pass them up this season. I have had several orders for large plants and hope to get the men later on to move them.

Referring again to the holly that holds its fruit, I hope that the government will not do anything foolish. I have found several others here which still have the old fruit on them, and it is just now turning dark and dropping off. "St. Ann" has this habit to a marked degree. I have been looking over the hollies you sent me, and