

I heard from a New Jersey friend that hollies in that section were badly burned by the winter. Apparently, the burning was not confined here.

Wilfred Wheeler

June 29, 1944

Our hollies did not suffer severely from winter burn. I should like to believe that this was because of my selection in such matters in years past, but I cannot be sure. I am sure, however, that such catastrophes do enable a careful plant grower to select varieties which stand up best against the unfortunate circumstances with which he has to contend.

We have had no frosts this spring to damage the cranberries, and I think the same is true of all the hollies, though I have had little time to examine them.

The holly cuttings put in before September 15th rooted very well, and those put in later did fairly well. The cuttings of the two males you sent me rooted exceedingly well; I am particularly glad because I have no really first-class males of my own selection. "Isaiah", which is a truly beautiful plant, is uncertain in rooting, and many of the small plants die before we get them to the field, in spite of the fact that the original tree withstands winter burning and other poor weather conditions very well.

Elizabeth C. White

October 7, 1944

I have been thinking about you these last few days, wondering if your area escaped the hurricane. I certainly hope so. If you could see our poor countryside, you would realize what trouble these storms can cause. We escaped the last hurricane, but this one came in all its fury and made a wreck of the woods and trees of the Cape.

Our woods suffered severely, and some of the hollies were broken by trees falling on them.

I have not yet put in any holly cuttings, since getting coal is so uncertain, and I do not want to run the greenhouse unless I can be assured of a winter's supply of coal. I hope you are more fortunate in this respect. I wanted to put in a lot of cuttings but shall have to wait another year. Also, the trees were so badly wind-swept that leaves are brown and young growth on the windy side shriveled; and about half the berries on trees exposed to the storm are on the ground. I have never seen the fruit so late in coloring, most of it is still green. I wonder if this means that it will not color.

Since the storm we have had such warm weather that many deciduous trees are leafing again, and this is bad for next year.

Such a year with war, frost, drought, and hurricane! We don't know what to expect next.

Wilfred Wheeler

October 12, 1944

Do you know anything about a Mr. Wolf in southern New Jersey? I received a letter from him and he sent a picture of his plantings of holly. It looks very interesting. Evidently he has collected wild plants and set them as an orchard on his own land.

I hope that when Batchelor gets out of the Army, he will come here and start something of the sort with us. And I am hoping that Charles will be interested, for I think there is a great future in the cut-holly business.

It may be I could get away for a trip to southern New Jersey by train. I should like to see Mr. Wolf's place.

Wilfred Wheeler

October 16, 1944

The hurricane blew down big pine trees about the village, but apart from the rain, over six inches, did us more good than the wind did harm. Of course, it was different along the Jersey coast, where immense property damage resulted and several lives were lost.

Before the hurricane, most of our reservoirs were entirely dry and there was not enough water to use for protection from frost or for collecting floaters which are worth so much money this year. The rain filled the reservoirs, and there has been enough seepage and lighter rains since so that we have had sufficient water for our needs.

I have not been able to put in any holly cuttings this year. The shortage of coal is a deterrent, but with me the shortage of labor absolutely prevents. The man who has previously worked with holly cuttings in the morning, before it was dry enough to scoop cranberries, has been gathering floaters this year on contract and working all hours and all kinds of weather on that job. Not a chance for holly.

The majority of my holly plants have very few berries on them. I think it likely that the severe drought of '43 has something to do with this, because there was no frost last spring to damage the blossoms. There are a few interesting exceptions; the two little plants of "Emily" are among them. They wintered in the field and are far from any pollen plants; yet they have an excellent crop of large berries. The last time I looked at them the berries had not turned color; but it is an exceptional holly which has well-colored berries before the first of November.

In the same row with the plants of "Emily" are a dozen or more plants of I. altaclarensis of about the same size or larger, but these were all badly winter-killed. I have had very poor success with this holly, but am most enthusiastic about a number of your selections of I. pauciflora. They average much better than mine, besides having the advantage of having been selected farther north. Of most I have too few specimens to judge their real value, but they look mighty good to me.

The enclosed clipping gives an account of a committee for the promotion of holly which may eventually get somewhere. It was started by Judge Brown whose home at Locust is at the base of Sandy Hook. He has a large collection of holly on his estate and has invited the committee to lunch there on November 4. He has secured permission from the Army to visit the large holly grove on Sandy Hook.

I did not know the name of Mr. Wolf, but I did know there was a man in South Jersey who has a large collection of holly planted in an orchard. When Mr. O'Rourke was here the last time, he planned to visit this orchard, but weather and other restrictions prevented. If you visit Mr. Wolf, it possible I may be able to join you and provide transportation from here. I am interested in seeing what he is doing.

Perhaps next year you may be able to secure some extra good cutting wood as the result of breakage of fine holly trees by the hurricane. I tried for many years to get a start with the "Griscom" tree, but I was not able to secure good cutting material until after it had been badly broken by a storm ten years ago. The strong sprouts, which started from the stumps of the broken branches, gave me the best of cutting material, and the thinning out of these bunched sprouts helped the tree to come back in good shape.

I have not seen the original "Griscom" tree for at least two years, but there is prospect of seeing it in a few weeks. Dr. Farnham of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station is planning to make a set of kodachrome slides for the new Holly Committee, and I hope to have the pleasure of introducing him to the "Griscom" tree after the berries are well-colored.

Elizabeth C. White

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