

About ten days ago all leaves were found to have dropped from the cuttings of I. aquifolium, but the other cuttings are in excellent condition.

What name would you like to have me give this new group of holly cuttings? I like the quality of the leaf so much.

Elizabeth C. White

January 5, 1940

I cannot recall such a long spell of cold weather at this time of year. This is the fourteenth day without a let-up, and it has not thawed once during this period--rather a record for our section. I had planned to send you the holly cuttings the day after Christmas, but it was far too cold, and only today have I been able to get them. I am sending you a box with quite a lot of cuttings from the tree in West Barnstable--they are the same as the sample sent to you before Christmas. I suggest calling the group, for the present, Cape Cod #1. I think it would be a good idea to name them for locations rather than for persons. We might call the Wilson hollies #2 and #3, or perhaps Cape Cod - Wilson until we think of a better name, and use #1 for the Allen tree.

I have located several other good trees, but as they have no berries on them this year, I shall have to wait to determine their sex.

I have received several letters from Mr. Dilatash, and he is certainly a holly fan. I am so glad that people are becoming seriously interested in holly, for I feared at one time that holly might be doomed to destruction. I suppose you have seen this booklet; on the whole, it is good, but I do not agree with his range for growing holly. Little does he realize that Bangor, Maine, often has temperatures as low as 40° to 50° below zero. And I have been in Plymouth, N. H., when it was 40° below.

I was never able to winter trees in Concord, Mass., and that is very near Lowell. His ideas on planting, etc., are good; they correspond closely to mine. But I am rather surprised that he can move such large trees. I suppose he root-prunes them beforehand.

I am planning to move several large trees -- 12' to 15' -- late this winter. My son has just bought the place where Cape Cod #1 is growing, and there are several hundred holly trees on it. He wants a couple near the house. There are some 30' to 40' trees on the place, but they have been sadly neglected and other trees have grown up about them.

Wilfred Wheeler

January 8, 1940

According to our experience, it is considerably later than desirable to put in holly cuttings. We have, however, found several varieties which will start well early in January. I should like to have a few more cuttings from the Wilson trees in order to test them more thoroughly.

We find that we get excellent results from cuttings taken during September and October, less satisfactory during November and each succeeding month. But as I said before, this varies with individual trees.

Mr. Dilatash is an enthusiastic holly fan; we work with him to a considerable extent. Another enthusiastic holly fan is G. G. Nearing of Ridgewood, N. J. Mr. Nearing advises avoidance of commercial fertilizers. We can use commercial fertilizers in very liberal quantities, but, like you and Mr. Dilatash, I prefer to rely principally on leafmold.

I am stressing more and more the quality of the individual tree, and it is for this reason that I am particularly eager to get a start with the best of the New England hollies, even though they may not actually be any hardier than the hardiest of the New Jersey trees.

You have had much more experience with holly in various geographical locations than either Mr. Dilatash or I, and I believe that some published statements on these points might not be amiss. I have done little or nothing in writing up the individuality of the various trees, but I believe it is high time that I start.

Elizabeth C. White

January 19, 1940

The big box of holly cuttings was delivered from the express office. They are slightly drier than desirable, but seemed to revive nicely with liberal watering.

I neglected to discuss the naming of these varieties in my last letter. We have used the numbering method for both blueberries and hollies. On a small scale, it is satisfactory; but if we have too many numbers after one name, it becomes difficult to keep the records. Therefore, instead of using Cape Cod and numbers for all the cuttings you may send, I would rather use a more local name with numbers, which would probably not exceed three or four.

In your last letter you wrote of the cuttings from the West Barnstable tree. These, I suppose, are the ones I have just received. Suppose we call them West Barnstable #1; in case you have another from the same district, we can identify it as #2, then #3, and so on. I should like to keep the name Wilson for the two hollies you sent first; Wilson #1 and Wilson #2, unless there is a local geographical name which you think would be better. I am labeling the new crop of cuttings, and the small lot previously received from the same tree, West Barnstable #1.

Elizabeth C. White

April 12, 1940

This has not been a winter for going about. We have never had such a succession of very cold weather and snow. Only last week did the frost get out of the ground at all, so that we could do a little farm work.

I am wondering how the hollies have come through. As far as I can see, there seems to be very little troubles. But I have heard of people who have lost all, fully 200 plants.

Have you seen the discussion in the Florists' Exchange by Mr. Nearing and Mr. Leach? I replied to their articles and hope the paper will publish them. A lot of interest is developing, and I feel sure we have at last started in the right direction to save the holly for America.

I am sending you a plant of the Ilex altaclarensis I wrote about last fall. It has been in the greenhouse all winter so it may need protection until spring really comes.

I have not been able to do much scouting this winter, but have located some promising trees, from which it might be well worth getting cuttings for propagation.

Wilfred Wheeler

April 15, 1940

This morning the very nice plant of Ilex altaclarensis came. I shall take care of it in the greenhouse until real spring arrives.

On Friday night, the temperature fell to nearly 20°. We had quite a heavy snow-storm, and it was nearly as cold the following night. It has done no damage to our cranberries, of course, as many of the bogs are still under water and others are not sufficiently developed to be subject to frost damage. I think the blueberry buds were also not sufficiently swollen to be injured.

A good deal of our holly has had the leaves badly burned by the winter. Mr. Dilatash reports it is the worst winter on holly he has ever known. I believe that there has been little stem injury, however; and if we do not suffer severe frosts in May, the holly will come through alright.

Elizabeth C. White

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September 27, 1940

Again we have reached the time for making holly cuttings, and the work is well under way at Whitesbog.

From the cuttings you so kindly sent last fall, we potted up in June: Wilson #1, 17 plants; Wilson #2, 19 plants; West Barnstable, 4 plants; and Allen, 17 plants.

From the Allen tree, we received many times the quantity of material that was received from the two Wilson trees, but it came so late in the winter and was so dry when it arrived. However, even the few plants obtained indicate a fine quality tree.

I hope you will be able to send more material from these trees at an early date, for we have learned that cuttings are increasingly handicapped if their planting time is later than the middle of October.

To insure the arrival of cuttings in good, fresh condition, they should first be surrounded with moist material, such as sphagnum moss, muslin, or newspapers soaked in water; then wrapped with several layers of waxed paper before being put in a container sufficiently strong to stand rough handling through mail or express.

A few days ago I had a most interesting visit from Jackson R. Batchelor of the U.S.D.A., who spoke of meeting you not long ago. He has interesting information on work with holly in various parts of the country.

Elizabeth C. White

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