

# Holly Pollination

## A Garden Guide

Hollies! Luscious foliage and plump berries are lovely to look at and an important winter food source for wildlife. Evergreen types make excellent screens. Hollies are a diverse genera, and vary greatly in size and foliage type. Their berries and foliage are invaluable for holiday wreaths, swags, bouquets, and other lovely seasonal decor. Members of this genus that are native to North America are extremely important nectar sources for the native bee, *Colletes sp.*



- A female holly must be pollinated by a male holly to set fruit.
- A suitable male and female pair need to have overlapping blooming periods, and need to be located within 300 feet of each other - the closer, the better.
- One male may pollinate about 1-8 females.
- Some female hollies are monoecious (hermaphroditic), parthenocarpic (produces fruits with no seeds), or partially parthenocarpic. All can produce more berries when planted near the appropriate males. Plant breeding has only made Holly genetics and pollination more confusing over the years.

**Group 1 - Blooms in May** - any of these males will aid in pollinating any of these females. Some of these females may be partially parthenocarpic.

Females	Males
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> × <i>cornuta</i> ‘Buttercup’ / Hefcup	<i>Ilex cornuta</i> (male - may be hard to find)
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> × <i>cornuta</i> ‘Nellie R. Stevens’**	<i>Ilex cornuta</i> × <i>aquifolium</i> ‘Edward J. Stevens’ (also may be hard to find)
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> × <i>cornuta</i> ‘Whoa Nellie’** (sport of Nellie R. Stevens)	
<i>Ilex cornuta</i> ‘Burfordii Nana’ / ‘Dwarf Burford’	
<i>Ilex cornuta</i> ‘Carissa’	
<i>Ilex cornuta</i> ‘Carolina Sentinel’	
<i>Ilex cornuta</i> × <i>pernyi</i> ‘Dr. Kassab’	
<i>Ilex cornuta</i> ‘Needlepoint’	

\*\* Best berry production when pollinated by *Ilex* × ‘Edward J. Stevens’.

## Group 2 - Blue Hollies

Females	Males
<i>Ilex x aquifolium</i> 'Centennial Girl'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Stallion'
<i>Ilex x aquifolium</i> 'Centennial Dragon' (sport of Centennial Girl)	likely Blue Prince & Blue Stallion
<i>Ilex x aquipernyi</i> 'Dragon Lady'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Stallion'
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Girl'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Boy' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Stallion'
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Maid'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Stallion'
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Princess'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Stallion'
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Castle Spire'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Castle Wall' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince'
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'China Girl'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'China Boy'
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Golden Girl'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Stallion' <i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Boy'
<i>Ilex x meserveae x pernyi</i> 'Red Beauty'	<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Prince'

## Group 3 - *Ilex x attenuata* & *I. opaca* (*I. x attenuata* has some *I. opaca* genetics)

Females	Males
<i>Ilex x attenuata</i> 'Fosterii' / Foster #2* <i>Ilex x attenuata</i> 'Savannah' <i>Ilex opaca</i> 'Green Leaf' <i>Ilex opaca</i> 'Maryland Dwarf' <i>Ilex opaca</i> 'Satyr Hill'	<i>Ilex opaca</i> (wild male) <i>Ilex opaca</i> 'Jersey Knight'

\*No pollinator necessary, but can increase berry production. Foster #2 can also be pollinated by Foster #4

### **Group 4 - Ilex aquifolium**

Females	Males
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> 'Argentea Marginata'	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> 'Ferox Argentea'

### **Group 5 - Blooms in June** - plant within 50 feet of each other

Females	Males
<i>Ilex decidua</i> 'Warren Red'	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Southern Gentleman'
<i>Ilex verticillata</i> (female)	<i>Ilex serrata</i> x. <i>verticillata</i> 'Apollo' <i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Southern Gentleman'
<i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Berry Heavy'	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Jim Dandy' and 'Mr Poppins'
<i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Berry Poppins'	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Mr. Poppins'
<i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Berry Nice'	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Jim Dandy' and 'Mr. Poppins'
<i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Little Goblin Orange' <i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Little Goblin Red'	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Little Goblin Guy'
<i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Red Sprite'	<i>Ilex</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Jim Dandy'
<i>Ilex serrata</i> x <i>verticillata</i> 'Sparkleberry'	<i>Ilex serrata</i> x. <i>verticillata</i> 'Apollo' <i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Southern Gentleman'
<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Winter Gold'	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Southern Gentleman'
<i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Winter Red'	<i>Ilex serrata</i> x. <i>verticillata</i> 'Apollo' <i>Ilex verticillata</i> 'Southern Gentleman'

All information gathered here is to the best of our knowledge for the best combinations and best performing plants here in WNC, and may not apply elsewhere.

## Notes:

*Ilex x attenuata* - cross between *Ilex cassine* (Dahoon Holly, US Native) and *I. opaca* (American Holly, US Native)

*Ilex aquifolium* - English Holly

*Ilex x aquipernyi* - cross between *Ilex aquifolium* (English Holly) and *I. pernyi* (Perny Holly)

*Ilex cornuta* - Chinese Holly

*Ilex decidua* - Possumhaw, US Native

*Ilex x meserveae* - Blue Holly hybrids - cross of *Ilex aquifolium* (English Holly) and *I. rugosa* (Tsuru Holly).

*Ilex opaca* - American Holly, US Native

*Ilex serrata* - Japanese Winterberry Holly

*Ilex verticillata* - Winterberry Holly, US Native



## Why Are My Hollies Not Producing Berries?

- Trees may be too young - they need to be at least 3-5 years old.
- You might need a male plant, and ideally it will be within 50'. 200' is technically acceptable, but the further away they are, the less likely the bees are to fly that far.
- There might not be enough bees or the weather may have been too cold or rainy when plants were blooming.
- Too much Nitrogen fertilizer.
- Very dry weather can cause trees to drop flowers and berries.
- Overzealous pruning.
- If the plants are growing in stressful conditions, they may switch to bearing every other year.

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76 Monticello Road Weaverville, NC 28787 828-645-3937 <https://reemscreek.com/>