

Holly

Ilex aquifolium



Identification

- Broadleaf, evergreen shrub or small tree
- Thick, glossy, dark-green, wavy leaves have sharp points on the leaf edges
- Small, sweet scented, whitish flowers occur in clusters from October to November
- Red, shiny bunches of round berries grow on female trees in winter



Holly infestation in a shelter belt Photo: M. von Tippelskirch



Holly leaves Photo: M. von Tippelskirch

Where is it found?

Holly is popular as a hedge species and can be found growing in the wild in Canterbury. It is commonly used in decorations and floral arrangements.

Why is it a problem?

Holly is a long-lived species. The berries are spread by birds and new plants can grow by suckering (sprouting from roots) and layering (rooting of branches that touch the ground). A shade tolerant species, holly can form dense stands in forests, topping the canopy and creating shady environments which are difficult for native species to grow in.

What can you do?

If you have holly in your garden, consider replacing it with a species that is less likely to spread, such as native mountain holly (*Olearia ilicifolia*).

Control

At any time of the year, small plantings and seedlings can be pulled or dug out. Mulch or dispose of material at a refuse station. Stumps can also be cut close to the ground and an appropriate herbicide applied immediately to the cut to prevent re-growth. Frilling or drilling may also be effective. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Holly berries Photo: M. von Tippelskirch