



Ilex cornuta 'Burfordii' Burford Holly¹

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INTRODUCTION

This dense evergreen shrub or small tree has glossy, dark green leaves, each with a single terminal spine (Fig. 1). Leaves are among the glassiest and darkest green of trees. The somewhat-showy clusters of fragrant, springtime, white flowers attract bees. The large, bright red, long-lasting berries during the fall and winter provide a nice contrast to the dark green leaves. The plants are self-fertile and do not need a male plant located nearby for pollination. It is one of the most popular shrubs in some areas of the country.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ilex cornuta* 'Burfordii'

Pronunciation: EYE-lecks kor-NOO-tuh

Common name(s): Burford Holly

Family: *Aquifoliaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; espalier; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

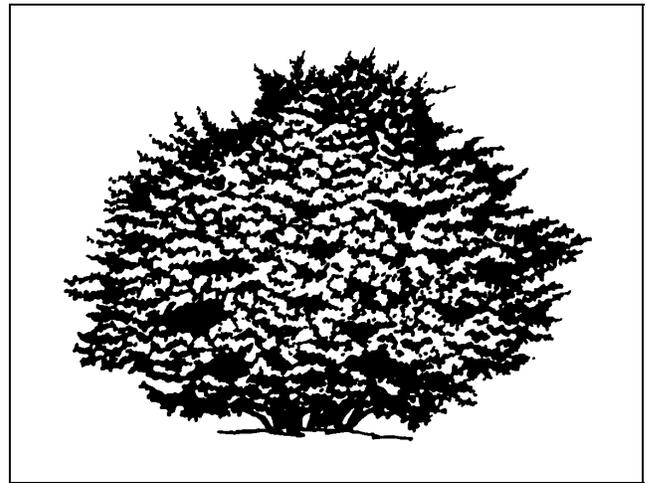


Figure 1. Mature Burford Holly.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire; terminal spine
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green; gray
Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerance: moderate

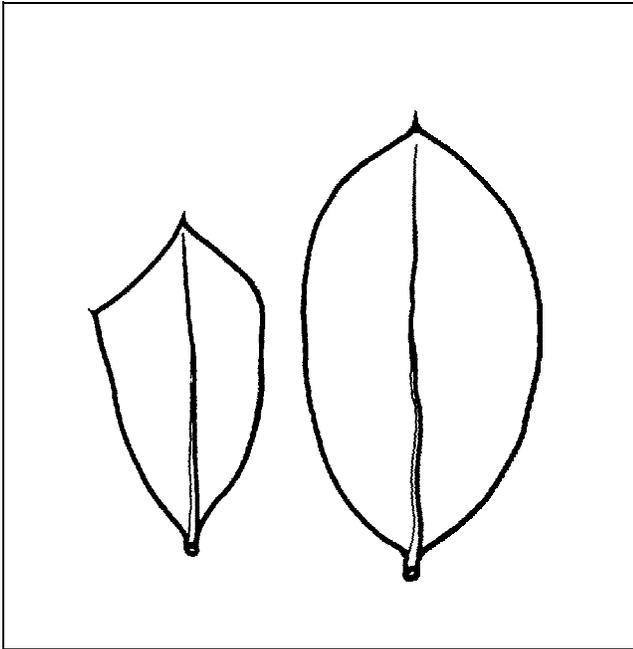


Figure 3. Foliage of Burford Holly.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Although typically pruned for formal hedges, the large form and gracefully drooping branches of Burford Holly make it ideal for unpruned natural plantings or as a specimen for spacious areas and large buildings. There are much better plants for pruning into formal hedges. Burford Holly can also be trained as an attractive vase-shaped multi-stemmed small tree. Trees trained in this fashion often have a thick crown comprised of many branches and small-diameter trunks. Burford Holly should be grown and used in this fashion more often.

Growing best in rich, well-drained, slightly acid soil, Burford Holly does well in full sun or part shade. However, flowering and subsequent fruiting is reduced in shady locations. Burford Holly is drought-tolerant and easy to grow once established. It is well suited

for low-maintenance landscapes which receive little or no irrigation or fertilizer after trees are established. Once the tree reaches 10 or 15 feet tall, growth rate slows. 'Burfordii Nana' makes a better shrub than 'Burfordii' due to a slower growth rate and smaller leaves.

Propagation is by cuttings only.

Pests

Burford Holly can be plagued with severe infestations of tea scale.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.