



Ilex x attenuata 'East Palatka' 'East Palatka' Holly¹

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INTRODUCTION

Discovered in 1927 growing near East Palatka, Florida, this Holly is one of a group of hybrids between *Ilex cassine* x *Ilex opaca* (Fig. 1). The broad, dull green, rounded leaves have one spine at the tip and few, if any, along the blade edge. The 30 to 45-foot-tall trees take on a moderately tight, pyramidal shape. A female Holly plant, East Palatka Holly is heavily laden with bright red berries in fall and winter, especially toward the top of the tree. A row of East Palatka Hollies will look quite uniform, adding to the popularity of the tree among landscape architects and designers.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ilex x attenuata* 'East Palatka'

Pronunciation: EYE-lecks x uh-ten-yoo-AY-tuh

Common name(s): 'East Palatka' Holly

Family: *Aquifoliaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; 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; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; 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

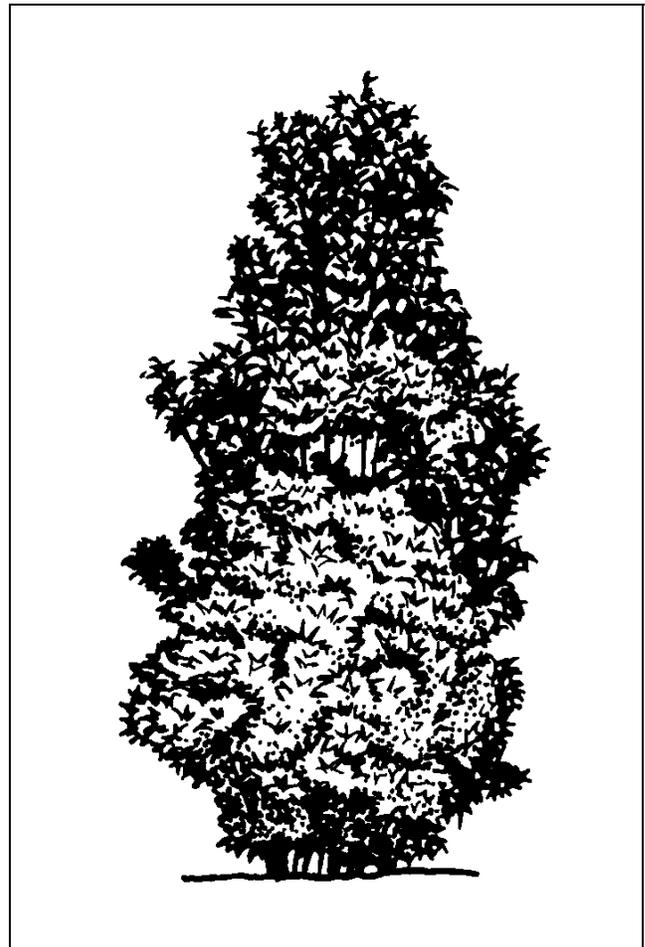


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'East Palatka' Holly.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 45 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: columnar; pyramidal
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire; spiny; terminal spine
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 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; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green

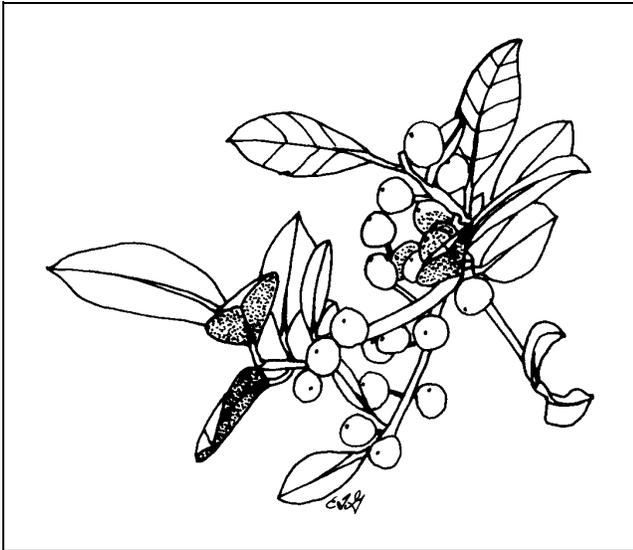


Figure 3. Foliage of 'East Palatka' Holly.

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;
well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: moderate

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: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

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

East Palatka Holly makes a durable street tree throughout its range and is quite drought-tolerant once it becomes well-established. Most trees are sheared in the nursery, unfortunately, and this practice is often repeated in the landscape after planting. The natural shape of the tree is rarely seen but is a graceful pyramid of drooping branches growing from a strong

central trunk, laden with bright red berries which remain on the trees until eaten by birds. The crown of East Palatka Holly grown with one central trunk is narrow, making it well-suited for urban areas having restricted vertical space.

Multi-stemmed, topped, and trimmed trees grow a wider crown and are probably not as suited for narrow, limited-space downtown sites as their single-stemmed counterparts. The tree should be grown with a central trunk. Young trees which are topped in the nursery grow several upright, multiple trunks. These eventually droop to the horizontal and then become more weeping, creating an unkempt, asymmetrical mess. Training the tree into a single-trunked tree will increase its durability and resistance to storm-damage, although many nurseries offer multi-trunked specimens. The tree grows well even in small tree pits carved out of downtown sidewalks.

East Palatka Holly grows quickly in full sun or partial shade on moist, acid soils. Growth is poor and foliage chlorotic on alkaline soil.

Another hybrid, 'Savannah', is a fast-growing female plant which also produces abundant red berries. The foliage is light green and variably-spined.

Propagation is by cuttings or grafting.

Pests

Scale and leaf miners are the only pests which cause damage, and this is rare.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern. Galls and witches broom are serious problems for many trees growing in central Florida. Trees often die when they become infested.