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Holly, Yaupon (spp.)

Fruit Color Red

Environment

This plant tolerates drought, flooding and salt well. This plant will grow in very dry to wet or submerged soil. Suitable soil is well-drained/loamy, sandy or clay. The pH preference is an acidic to slightly alkaline (less than 6.8 to 7.7) soil.

Landscape Uses

- Woodland garden
- Seashore planting
- Border
- Screen
- Espalier
- Street tree
- Standard
- Specimen

Attributes and Features

- Wetlands plant
- Attracts birds
- Inconspicuous blooms
- Persistent fruit
- Attractive fruit
- Fruit is edible by birds

Ilex vomitoria

Yaupon Holly

Aquifoliaceae (Holly)

Type Tree, woody plant

Hardy range 7A to 10A

Height 15' to 18' / 4.60m to 5.40m

Spread 10' to 15' / 3.00m to 4.60m

Growth rate Slow

Form Rounded and vase shaped

Exposure Full shade to full sun

Persistence Evergreen

Bloom Color White

Bloom Time Spring

Leaf Color Green

Fall Color No change in fall color

Leaf Identification

Type: Simple

Arrangement: Alternate

Venations: Brachidodrome, pinnate and reticulate

Margins: Crenate and serrulate

Shapes: Ovate

Length: Less than 2in./5cm

Native Habitat

Eastern North America to central Florida

Native to the following North American locales: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia

Crown, Branch and Twig

This plant is symmetrical with a fine texture and has an open crown.

This plant's bark is not showy.

Branches or twigs are thin.



This plant is often grown with multiple trunks.

This plant can be trained to a single trunk.

This plant has low flammability.

Culture Notes

This is a tough, small native tree of the southern United States. Yaupon Holly grows quickly in a variety of locations, from full sun or shade to seaside or swamps, in sand or clay. It can adapt to any situation it is planted in. Crowns will be thin in the shade. It will grow in soil with a pH in the 7's and is very tolerant of drought and sea salt. Trees sprout from the base and roots forming clumps. Trees attract cedar waxwings, mockingbirds, robins and many other birds.

Growing well in sun or light shade in soils from dry to wet, Yaupon Holly withstands drought when established and is highly salt-tolerant, making it ideally suited to seaside plantings. It grows naturally without irrigation on the dunes along the Atlantic Ocean. Trees are tolerant of urban conditions and could perform well as street trees, especially along the coast where salt air and wind makes it tough for most other plants.

Wood is considered diffuse porous meaning that there is little difference in size of pores between spring and summer wood.

Use as a street tree

This plant can be grown as a multi-trunk tree for use in highway median strips and in landscapes, or can be used as a street tree where there is not a need for tall-vehicle clearance beneath the crown. The small stature and low, spreading, branching habit makes pruning for vehicular clearance difficult unless it is properly trained from an early age to develop one main trunk. The effort required initially to train this tree for street tree use, however, may be offset by its advantages.

Tree establishment specifications

Choose good quality trees for planting. The most common cause of young tree failure is planting too deep. In most instances, the point where the top-most root in the root ball originates from the trunk (referred to as the root flare zone or root collar) should be located just above the soil surface. You may have to dig into the root ball to find the root flare. If there is nursery soil over this area, scrape it off. Never place ANY soil over the root ball. The planting hole should be at least twice the width of the root ball, preferably wider because roots grow best in loose soil. In all but exceptional circumstances where the soil is very poor, extensive research clearly shows that there is no need to incorporate any amendments into the backfill soil. Simply use the loosened soil that came out of the planting hole. Simply planting with the topmost portion of the root ball slightly higher than the surrounding soil might still install the tree too deep - be sure to locate the root flare.

Weed suppression during establishment is essential. Apply a 3-inch thick layer of mulch to at least a six-foot diameter circle around the tree. This area should be at least two feet in diameter for each inch of tree trunk diameter and maintained during the establishment period. Apply a thinner layer of mulch directly over the root ball but keep it at least 10 inches from the trunk. This allows rainwater, irrigation and air to easily enter the root ball and keeps the trunk dry. Placing mulch against the trunk and applying too thick a layer above the root ball can kill the plant by oxygen starvation, death of bark, stem and root diseases, prevention of hardening off for winter, vole and other rodent damage to the trunk, keeping soil too wet, or repelling water.

Regular irrigation after planting encourages rapid root growth that is essential for tree establishment. Trees provided with regular irrigation through the first growing season after transplanting require about 3 months (hardiness zones 9-11), 6 months (hardiness zones 7-8), or one year or more (hardiness zones 2-6) per inch of trunk diameter to fully establish roots in the landscape soil. Trees in desert climates may take longer to establish. Trees that are under-irrigated during this establishment period (and most trees are) often require additional time to establish because roots grow more slowly. Be prepared to irrigate through the entire establishment period, especially during periods of drought.

Irrigation also helps maintain and encourage the desirable dominant leader in the tree canopy on large-maturing trees. Instead of a dominant leader, trees that are under-irrigated during the establishment period often develop undesirable, low, co-dominant stems and double leaders that can split from the tree later.

Unlike established plants, which do best with deep, infrequent irrigation, research clearly shows that recently transplanted trees and shrubs establish quickest with light, frequent irrigation. For trees planted in spring or summer, provide one (cooler hardiness zones) to three irrigations (warmer hardiness zones) each week during the first few months after planting. Daily irrigation in the warmest hardiness zones provides the quickest establishment. Following the initial few months of frequent irrigation, provide weekly irrigation until plants are fully established. With every irrigation, apply one (cool climates) to two (warm climates) gallons of water per inch trunk diameter (e.g. 2 to 4 gallons for a 2-inch tree) over the root ball only. In most landscapes that receive more



than 30 inches of rain or irrigation annually, if the mulch area is maintained weed-free, irrigation does not need to be applied outside of the root ball. Never add water if the root ball is saturated.

In cooler hardiness zones, in all but the driest years, irrigation of spring- and summer-planted trees usually can be discontinued once fall color has begun. Irrigation of fall planted trees, however, should be continued until foliage has dropped from the deciduous trees in the region. In warmer climates, irrigate fall-and winter-planted trees as described for the spring- and summer-planted trees.

In drier, desert climates there is benefit to be gained from applying additional irrigation outside of the root ball area. This is best done by making a large diameter berm four to six inches high, then filling it with water so it percolates into the soil. For the first two years, irrigate twice each week through the spring, once per week in summer provided monsoons arrive, and twice each week again in fall if it remains warm. Taper off watering to once or twice each month in winter and resume twice weekly next spring. For years three to five, water twice per month in spring, summer, and fall and once or twice per month in winter. During years five through seven, water once every three weeks in warm weather and once every six weeks in winter. After this, the drought-tolerant desert trees should be able to survive on natural rainfall.

Trees with good, strong structure need no pruning at planting, except to remove broken twigs. Do not remove branches to compensate for root loss - research has shown that this can be detrimental to establishment.

Pests, Diseases and Damaging Agents

Pests: Scale, leaf miners, mites, aphids appear to form a long list of problems, but none are normally serious.

Disease: *Sphaeropsis* fungus forms witches brooms severely deforming and making infected plants useless.

