

# Holly

*Ilex aquifolium*

## What to look for

Evergreen shrub or small tree

Grows up to 10m tall

Numerous garden varieties

Tough, dark green, spiny leaves

Clusters of scarlet red berries

Fruits often stay on the bush over winter and are popular with birds



## Where found

May form undergrowth in woods but is also found in woodland edges, hedges and scrub

## When to look

The leaves are evergreen

Ripe fruit from October onwards

### Did you know?

Holly provides birds with food, and with protection from winter storms and predators

It is one of the principal food plants for the holly blue caterpillar. The butterfly lays its eggs on holly in spring, and ivy in summer

Holly is the plant of the God Saturn, celebrated at the Feast of Sol Invictus on December 25th

Holly wood is used to make delicate instruments such as weather-gauges and barometers

It is also one of the fine woods used to make ornamental pieces known as Tunbridge Ware

Druids decorated their huts in winter with holly and ivy boughs to make them suitable abodes for sylvan spirits

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