

Plant "Imagination"



Ilex verticillata (Winterberry Holly)

The warmth of the Winterberry Holly with its bright red berries dispels some of the chill we feel after our fall foliage has retreated. It is time to look around us for winter landscaping ideas -- ideas that may make the winter landscape less dreary next year.

Ilex verticillata is also called "black alder," "brook alder" and "fever bush." Its use by Native Americans as medicine is where it got the name "fever bush." They also used the bark to heal cuts and bruises. In nature winterberry shrubs are typically found in wetland areas, although they can be successfully cultivated elsewhere.

Winterberry holly prefers acidic soils. It can be grown in partial shade or full sun. Winterberry shrubs can grow anywhere from 3' to 15' tall, and their width also varies. There are a number of cultivars, of various height and width.

The plant is common in the wild, and winterberry holly is deciduous which is a benefit. Winterberry holly's exciting display of red berries is enhanced as this holly shrub sheds its leaves. All the attention is drawn to the plant's fruit, with no foliage to obstruct the viewer's vision. If your passion is arts and crafts, cut winterberry holly berry-laden branches for arts and crafts such as floral arrangements, wreaths, kissing balls and winter window boxes.

Winterberry holly will attract songbirds to your property, the fruit of winterberry holly serving as an emergency food source for birds.