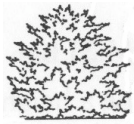


# *Ilex crenata* – Japanese Holly (*Aquifoliaceae*)

*Ilex crenata* is an evergreen shrubs with relatively small, spineless leaves and black fruit. It is usually 3-10' tall, with a similar spread. Japanese Holly look more like a boxwood than a holly. It ranges from slow-growing to relatively fast-growing, and is a good choice for hedges. Japanese Holly tolerates severe pruning and is a good substitute for boxwood, especially in milder climates, zone 6 & 7, as it grows faster than boxwood but can be similarly pruned/sheared.

## FEATURES

### Form



-Broadleaf evergreen shrub, 5-8' tall x 5-8' wide; usually seen as a much branched, shrub with a dense, rigid compact form of a rounded or broad rounded outline.

-medium to slow growth rate (less than 12" per year)

### Culture

-sun to part shade  
-prefers light, moist, slightly acid soils, with lots of organic matter. The soil needs to be well-drained, as Japanese Holly does not like overly moist soil. Regular watering, however, is needed to keep the plants looking their best. Several inches of mulch will help preserve moisture in the soil.  
-withstands severe pruning  
-winter injury in northern climates will be more severe on plants grown in the sun

### Foliage

-leaves alternate, simple, spineless, crowded, elliptic  
-0.5-1.5" long x 0.3- 0.5" wide, dark green above, dotted beneath with blackish clear or translucent glands

### Flowers

-dioecious, unisexual, dull greenish



white

-in leaf axils of current season's growth  
-May-June  
-not showy

### Fruits

-black, berry-like, globose, 0.25" diameter  
-Sept.-Oct., may persist into spring in mild climates  
-borne under the foliage, inconspicuous

### Twigs

-stem normally green on current season's growth, turning gray-green to gray-brown

### Trunk

-not applicable

## USAGE

### Function

-shrub for foundations, borders, group plantings, mass plantings, formal or informal hedges, topiary backgrounds, specimens

### Texture

-medium texture  
-thick density

### Assets

-shiny green leaves  
-compact form that can be readily pruned

### Liabilities

-in northern regions, the foliage can be injured by cold temperatures (however, some cultivars offer improved cold tolerance)  
-will develop iron deficiency if the pH is too high

### Habitat

-Zones 5 or 6, depending on cultivar to 8  
-Native to Japan, Korea

## SELECTIONS

### Alternates

-shrubs with broadleaf evergreen foliage (*Buxus* hybrids, *Ilex x meserveae*, *Ilex opaca*, *Mahonia aquifolium*, etc.)

### Cultivars – Variants – Related species

-'Beehive' - A compact, flattened globe, with tiny leaves.  
-'Bennett's Compacta' - A compact plant with a semi-upright habit reaching a height of 4'.  
-'Compacta' - A slow grower that reaches a height and spread of 4-5'.  
-'Convexa' - A dense and hardy cultivar that can be much wider than it is tall.  
-'Glass' - A large, 12' tall cultivar suitable for use in hedges.  
-'Glory' - A dense, compact, globe-shaped plant.  
-'Green Lustre' ('Green Luster') - A 2-3' tall tree with glossy leaves.  
-'Helleri' - A very dwarf type that forms a slow-growing mound 2-3' tall.  
-'Hetzii' - A 5' tall plant with dark green glossy leaves. Wider than it is tall.  
-'Highlander' - An open, pyramidal plant reaching a height of about 8'.  
-'Jersey Pinnacle' - A fast-growing, upright cultivar.  
-'Northern Beauty' - A dense, twiggy plant reaching a height and spread of about 4'.  
-'Stokes' - A dense, slow-growing mound with tiny foliage.  
-'Twiggy' - A National Arboretum selection that is slow-growing and forms a compact pyramid.