



Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article December 26, 2016

Beautiful Berries to Behold

by Lydia Holley

There is nothing prettier in winter than a shrub or tree filled with bright colorful berries. Although there are several different types of shrubs that sport berries in winter, most people think of hollies when they think of a berry-bearing shrub.

Hollies to grow for their berries are dwarf Burford holly (*Ilex cornuta* 'Burfordii nana'), possumhaw holly (*Ilex decidua*), American holly (*Ilex opaca*), yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) and Savannah holly (*Ilex x attenuata*), to name a few. Depending upon the holly you select, they can be kept sheared to around 5 ft tall or grow to a 45 ft tree.



The Savannah holly at the HCMGA Dream Garden located inside the East Texas Arboretum has been named HCMGA Plant of the Month for December. It sports large clusters of red berries over the entire tree.

Only female hollies display berries, so it is best to make sure it is fruiting when you purchase one. Although yaupon hollies have berries, dwarf yaupon hollies are different. The most popular cultivars of dwarf yaupon hollies are all male clones, and will never bear fruit.

If you're looking for something other than a holly and still want berries, try cotoneasters, heavenly bamboo or firethorn. There are several types of cotoneasters. Most tolerate a variety of soils and can be easily trimmed. Many grow short and wide, and some have lovely gray foliage which makes a nice contrast to other plantings. Be aware that cotoneasters also vary in their ability to fruit, so some types will have more berries than others.

Heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*) has obtained a bad reputation due to its invasive nature, but I have always loved its showy clusters of red berries.

Firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*) also has a reputation for being invasive. Its berries can be red or orange. Be aware that this plant has vicious thorns, so you will want to plant it where you and guests do not venture often. It is a great plant to use for deterring intruders.

Whether you have a small space or a large area to plant, you, too, can behold beautiful berries in your garden.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com or visit www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org.