

# Holly

## *Ilex aquifolium*

### Family

Aquifoliaceae (holly)

### Also known as

English holly

### Where is it originally from?

Europe, West Asia, North West Africa

### What does it look like?

Evergreen, much-branched shrub or small tree (<12 m tall). Glossy dark green leaves (3-10 cm long) alternate along the stem, are paler below, and have wavy, thick, usually deeply serrated edges, with a spine at each point. Flowers with four white petals (3-5 mm long, Oct-Nov) occur in clusters and are followed in winter by round, bright red berries.

### Are there any similar species?

Chinese holly (*Ilex cornuta*) has thick, glossy, almost rectangular leaves and berries in summer, the variegated form is common in cultivation. Other *Ilex* species are grown in cultivation but have not naturalised in NZ.

### Why is it weedy?

Large, long-lived species that can withstand a variety of conditions and tolerates most soil types, but prefers good drainage, and is shade tolerant.

### How does it spread?

Seed is bird-spread and it also spreads by suckering (sprouting from roots) and layering (rooting of branches that touch the ground).

### What damage does it do?

Competes with native plants for light, nutrients and water. Suckering and layering allow it to form dense thickets that can dominate the tall shrub layer, creating a deep shade difficult for native species to grow in.

### Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Native and plantation forest, forest edges and hedgerows.

### What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Physical removal - Hand pull small plants, or dig out entire plant including roots (all year round): Dispose of at a refuse transfer station, burn, or bury deeply.
2. Cut and paste (all year round) - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply either glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) or picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Basal Spray - Basal spray stems up to 20cm diameter with X-Tree Basal. Apply from the ground to a height 6 times the diameter of the plant, ensure the base is thoroughly covered at ground level.
4. Drill or frill - Drill downward sloping holes around the circumference of the trunk about 8-10 cm apart, or Frill (make deep cuts into the sapwood at regular intervals around the base of the tree, taking care not to ring-bark the plant). Fill the holes with undiluted 'neat' glyphosate (360g/L active ingredient) or saturate the frill cuts with glyphosate (360g/L active ingredient) mixed at 250ml/L OR a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted) .

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

### What can I do to stop it coming back?

Monitor the site and treat regrowth and seedlings. If possible, search out and eliminate the source of the infestation.



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Trevor James



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