
Heartwood Nursery News



Native Plants: Ecofriendly Beauty for the Natural World in your Backyard

The Crown Jewel of Horticulture: *Ilex opaca*, American Holly

Popular throughout history for Christmas greens and bright red berries, *Ilex opaca*, American Holly, has been harvested for cut branches over the past century to near extinction in much of its natural range.

American Holly is an evergreen native species that matures into statuesque, sentinel trees that can live over 300 years. Her berries provide food for birds and small mammals and pollen for honeybees. The dense, evergreen foliage provides great cover for wildlife, with spiny leaves protecting small birds and mammals from larger predators and the elements.

Humans have revered the enduring nature of Holly for centuries, sensing a glimmer of hope during a seemingly lifeless, cold winter. Early cultures attributed much lore and magic to the Holly tree, as it doesn't shed its leaves until springtime.

Hollies are beautiful year-round, and as the days turn colder and shorter, they come into their full glory, with their glistening dark green leaves and glowing red, orange, or yellow berries. In my view, American Hollies, both female and male trees, are the unrivaled crown jewels of the horticultural world.

At Heartwood, we're proud to be leading advocates for American Holly. We're the largest propagator of American Holly in the United States, and our Holly Forest, featuring over 75 mature American Hollies, is a Holly Society of America Certified Arboretum and Test Center.

Join me on Sunday, December 7, for a walk through our Holly Forest. While enjoying fresh air, birdsong, and the beauty of berry-adorned Hollies, we'll talk about Holly lore and legend as well as why Hollies are vital to today's gardens and landscapes. Details at [The Holidays at Heartwood](#).

Want to learn how I became dedicated to—okay, some would say obsessed with—American Holly? See my recent post on our new Heartwood blog, [Walk a Native Plant Path](#).

--Sue Hunter, Owner, Heartwood Nursery



**HOLLY FOREST
GUIDED WALK**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 @ 11AM

Led by Heartwood Nursery owner Sue Hunter

*Over 100 Hollies filled with berries
and bird song await*

The poster features a decorative border of holly leaves and red berries. A red cardinal is perched on a branch on the left, and a blue jay is perched on a branch on the right. The text is centered on a light beige background.

Sneak Peek: The Children's Garden is coming along for opening next June!



HEARTWOOD NURSERY

Holly Honey

IS AVAILABLE



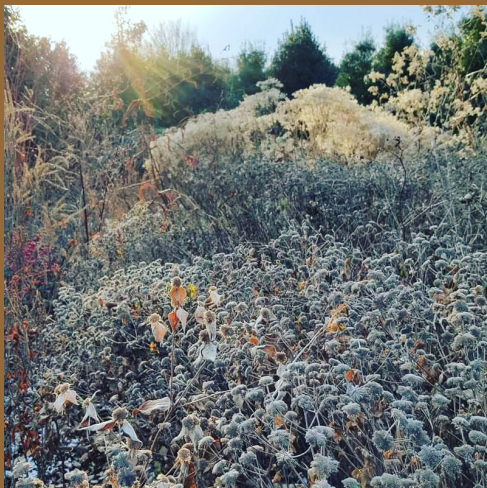
Don't Be a Deadheader!

Resist the urge to 'tidy up' and cut back stems and spent flowers. Dormant perennials provide seed and natural structure for winter birds. Dry, hollow stems provide protection for small insects. Leaving leaf litter also provides habitat throughout the coming months for beneficial pollinators.

Disposing of leaves and brush this year results in lower populations of next year's nocturnal moths and other insects whose fragile cocoons overwinter and blend in with dead leaves on the ground.

Create small piles of twigs and sticks to provide year-round habitat. At Heartwood, we've seen an increase in large moths, butterflies and fireflies by keeping our gardens scruffy!

Even a small section of your yard can make a difference.



Join us for

The Holidays at Heartwood

Holly Forest walk ~ Open House ~ Wreathmaking workshops
Fresh cut greens, wreaths and arrangements ~ and more!

WALK-IN WREATH WORKSHOPS

STARTING NOVEMBER 28

Enjoy free cozy treats while you create
with fresh Heartwood greenery



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Open Year Round
Monday-Saturday 9 am - 4 pm
Closed Sunday

Holiday Hour Adjustments:
Closed: Nov 27, 2025 (Thanksgiving)
Closed: Dec 24 through Jan 10, 2026



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