

# Ilex aquifolium

## COMMON NAMES

holly

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

An evergreen much branched shrub or small tree to 12 m tall. Leaves (3-10cm long) alternate along the stem, and are dark glossy green above, paler below, with the characteristic undulating, thick, usually deeply serrate margins, with a spine at the point. Flowers occur as clusters, with 4 white petals (3-5mm long). Conspicuous bright red spherical berries develop in the winter.

## HABITAT

Terrestrial.

## GENUS

Ilex

## FAMILY

Aquifoliaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Ilex aquifolium* L.

## FLOWERING

October, November

## YEAR NATURALISED

1901

## ORIGIN

W., C., and S. Europe, W. Asia, N.W. Africa

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

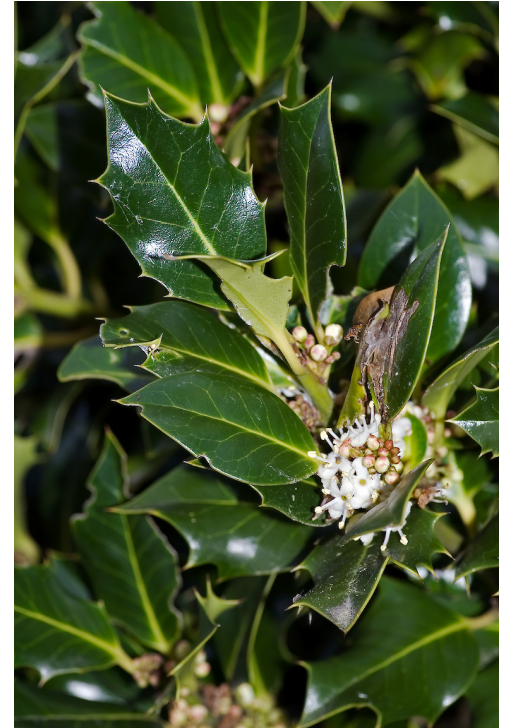
Perennial

## POISONOUS PLANT

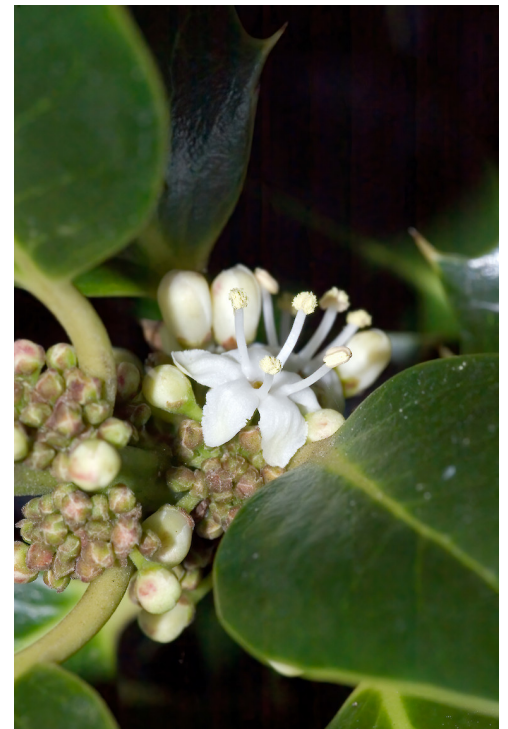
Most parts of this plant are poisonous especially the scarlet red berries.

## ETYMOLOGY

**ilex**: An old Latin name for the Holm oak, which holly allegedly resembles



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## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

## NVS CODE

ILEAQU

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A (1986). Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ilex-aquifolium/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026