



Deciduous Holly - *Ilex decidua*

Description: Deciduous holly is commonly found in low spots, bordering streams and ponds. *Ilex decidua* is a truly outstanding small native tree, very low maintenance, which drops its leaves in fall to reveal showy red or orange berries (on female plants) that remain throughout the winter. Attracts songbirds.



Leaf: Alternate, simple, deciduous, 2 to 3 inches long, margin shallowly blunt toothed and often revolute, narrowly obovate (variable), tips rounded or broadly wedge-shaped, glabrous and dull green above, paler below.

Flower: Dioecious; both male and females are short-stalked and greenish white with 4 petals, usually in small clusters, appear in spring.

Fruit: Round drupes on short stalks, 1/3 inch in diameter, reddish-orange to red in clusters of 2 to 4, ripening in fall but may persist through the winter, seeds grooved and larger (3/16 inch) than *Ilex verticillata*.

Twig: Slender, gray to green-brown, with scattered light lenticels, buds and leaf scars are small, one vascular bundle scar, stiff spur shoots common.

Bark: Thin, smooth (may be warty) and grayish brown, with lenticels.

Form: Upright shrub with multiple stems, branches stiff and often appearing thorny, reaches heights of 20 feet.

Site Requirements: Grows well in shade and full sun. Soil preferences include clay, loam, sand, acidic, and alkaline. Well-drained soil is ideal. Holly is flood, heat and drought tolerant.

Native Range: 5-8

AL, AR, DC, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, MO, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA