



## *Ilex* x 'Nellie R. Stevens' 'Nellie R. Stevens' Holly<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

A hybrid between *Ilex aquifolium* and *Ilex cornuta*, Nellie R (Fig. 1). Stevens Holly has kept the best traits of both parents, with lustrous, dark green leaves and abundant fruit production. Leaves are among the darkest of any plant. Vigorous and fast-growing, this Holly quickly grows into an attractive, broad pyramidally-shaped evergreen, 20 to 30 feet high and 10 to 12 feet wide. It will need a male Holly nearby to ensure pollination and production of the vivid red berries. Chinese Holly, *Ilex cornuta* will flower at the proper time and may be used for this purpose.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Ilex* x 'Nellie R. Stevens'

**Pronunciation:** EYE-lecks

**Common name(s):** 'Nellie R. Stevens' Holly

**Family:** Aquifoliaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 9 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; Christmas tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

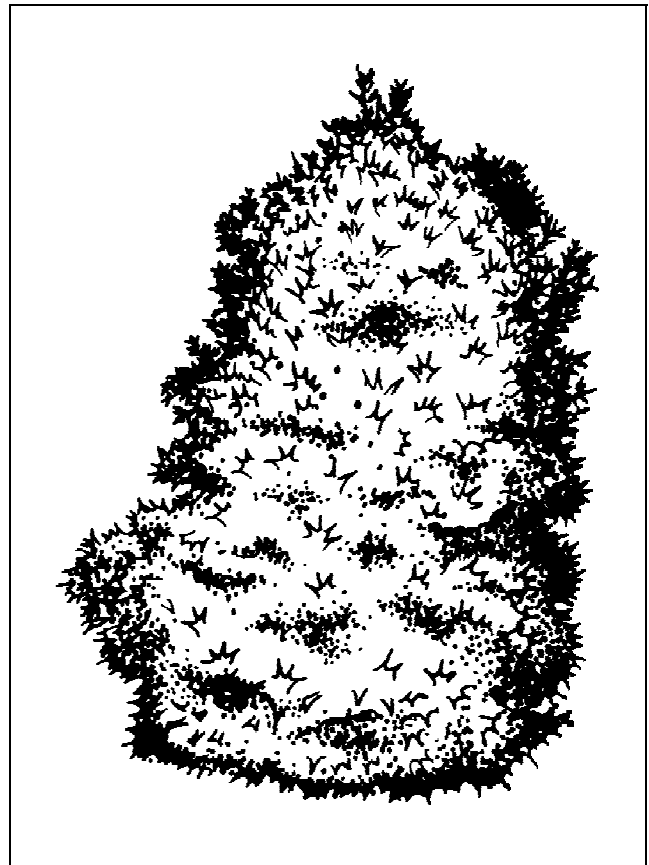


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Nellie R. Stevens' Holly.

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-313, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet

**Spread:** 10 to 15 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** oval; pyramidal; upright

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** medium

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire; pectinate; spiny

**Leaf shape:** oblong

**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** < .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

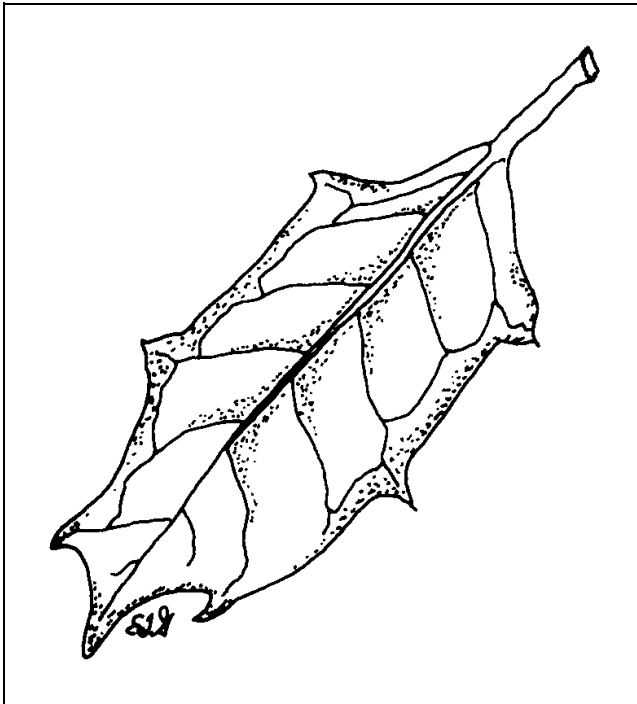


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Nellie R. Stevens' Holly.

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** green

**Current year twig thickness:** medium

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; extended flooding; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

Nellie R. Stevens Holly is one of the best Hollies for the warmer regions of the country, and is ideally-suited for use as a screen or border. It maintains a nice, uniform shape without pruning. It is now

becoming widely available and is one of the best plants for making a screen due to its very dense, symmetrical habit. Locate it where it will have enough space to spread since trees become wide at the base. Lower branches can be removed to create a clear trunk for planting along a walk or near a patio, but the tree really shines as a specimen or screen allowed to develop with all branches intact to the ground. Nursery operators grow the tree either as a multi-stemmed clump or with one central leader. Multi-stemmed trees may not hold up in ice storms as well as those with a central leader. Main branches on single-leadered trees are usually well-secured to the trunk, making the tree sturdy and a permanent fixture for almost any landscape.

Nellie R. Stevens Holly should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, slightly acid soil. Plants are drought-resistant once established.

Propagation is by cuttings or grafting.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern, perhaps scale on occasion.