American Holly
# AMERICAN HOLLY

*Ilex opaca* Ait.

**FAMILY:** Aquifoliaceae

## IDENTIFICATION CLUES

### SIZE:
medium tree, up to 70 feet tall

### LEAF:
evergreen, shiny and stiff; dark green above and paler green underneath. The leaf edges are wavy with sharp spines

### FLOWER:
white, small and inconspicuous in the late spring

### FRUIT:
red berries which remain on the stems into winter

### BARK:
pale gray and very smooth on younger trees; older bark appears rougher with “warts”

## Where to Look
American Holly prefers rich, moist soil like along river-bottoms but will grow in drier soil and is fairly common throughout the state as an understory tree.

## Importance to Humans
American Holly is used as an evergreen tree in gardens and for holiday decorating. The light, almost white wood is also used by cabinet makers and woodworkers.

## Importance to Wildlife
The berries are an important food source for many birds.