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HOLLY

Ilex Aquifolium

 2000?

Why is holly so prickly? Quite simply, to protect itself from the big grass-eating animals of the woods and meadows. Its prickly leaves provide dense cover for birds, protecting them from cats and other predators. The yellow brimstone butterfly nestles safely under its leaves all winter. But do holly leaves actually taste good? Apparently, they do and cattle love them. Farmers used to give holly leaves to their cattle, but don't worry, not all the leaves are prickly. The farmers even ate the young leaf shoots themselves and used the spikey branches to sweep their chimneys. The scarlet berries that grow on the female tree are a vital source of food for blackbirds, pigeons, thrushes and small mammals which helps disperse the seeds. The berries are toxic to humans and can cause vomiting which is good because consuming them can be fatal. In the Alsace they distill brandy from holly berries. Holly wood is the whitest of all woods. It is heavy and hard and is used to make walking sticks. Goethe's walking stick and Harry Potter's wand were made of holly wood as are many white chess pieces. It is hard to imagine Christmas without holly branches and wreaths decorating our houses.

They are seen as a symbol of fertility and immortality and protect us from evil spirits.

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Ook in andere talen



Also in other languages



Ankaŭ en aliaj lingvoj

