
Ilex ‘Sparkleberry’



The U.S. National Arboretum presents ‘Sparkleberry’ hybrid winterberry, an improved deciduous holly for the landscape. ‘Sparkleberry’ produces a striking and long-lasting display of brilliant red winter berries on large plants of upright form. Planted at the woodland's edge or in a massed grouping, ‘Sparkleberry’ will add sparkle to your landscape! ‘Sparkleberry’ is a female selection and requires a pollinator for good fruiting. A male selection of the same cross, *Ilex* ‘Apollo’, was released as a pollinator for ‘Sparkleberry’.

Winner of a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Gold Medal Plant Award, 1987.



‘Sparkleberry’ displays its brilliant red fruits from fall (upper left) through winter (upper right), and often until spring (below, with ‘Dream Catcher’ flowering cherry).



U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction
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'Sparkleberry' hybrid winterberry

Botanical name:	<i>Ilex</i> 'Sparkleberry' (<i>I. serrata</i> × <i>I. verticillata</i>) (NA 29738, PI 378149)
Family:	Aquifoliaceae
Hardiness:	USDA Zones 5b–9
Development:	Deciduous hybrid female selection produced by controlled crossing of <i>Ilex serrata</i> and <i>I. verticillata</i> in 1961 by William F. Kosar at the U.S. National Arboretum. <i>Ilex</i> 'Apollo' (NA 29739, PI 422217) is a male selection of the same cross that was selected for its ability to provide sufficient pollen at the correct time for pollinating 'Sparkleberry'. Released 1978.
Significance:	'Sparkleberry' and 'Apollo' resulted from a U.S. National Arboretum plant breeding program to develop hollies with highly ornamental qualities and improved adaptability to diverse landscape conditions. This cross between a Japanese species and a southeastern U.S. native resulted in a plant with the heavy fruiting character of the Asian parent, the large fruit size and adaptability to wet soils of the native parent, and superior fruit retention to either parent.
Description:	<p>Height and Width: 12 feet tall and wide.</p> <p>Habit: Large, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub; upright form.</p> <p>Foliage: Typical of species parents, with yellow autumn color. Male pollinator, 'Apollo', is similar in size, habit, and leaf.</p> <p>Flowers: Small, white, female flowers in early June. 'Apollo' (male) produces abundant flowers.</p> <p>Fruit: Abundant, large (5/16 inch), brilliant, glossy red fruit with outstanding persistence. Fruit may persist until March. Fruit borne on short pedicels on current season's growth. Fruit production requires male pollinator; 'Apollo' is particularly suitable, but a male of either parent species can suffice.</p>
Culture:	Adaptable to wet or dry sites and a wide range of soil types, from light, sandy loam to heavy, clay loam and muck soils. Adaptable to sun or light shade. Flowers and fruits more heavily in full sun.
Propagation:	Roots easily from softwood cuttings throughout the growing season, under mist, using 1000-3000 ppm IBA. Roots in 6-8 weeks.
Landscape use:	Effective in mass plantings and suitable for large landscape areas. Highly ornamental at a woodland edge. Tolerant to air pollution, salts and wide range of soil types. A male pollinator is required for fruit set.
Availability:	Readily available from mail-order firms and retail and wholesale nurseries.

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