**“Boy holly” and “Girl holly” plants**

Holly is a dioecious plant. This means there are separate male and female plants. In order for a female plant to produce berries every year, it must be located within 30 to 40 feet of a male so its flowers can be pollinated. Otherwise, the female will grow, but won’t produce berries.

Birds and animals eat holly berry-like drupes in winter when their food supplies are low. Even though animals eat holly fruits, you should not! The same berries that animals enjoy may be poisonous to humans.
Help leaf miner Eric find his friends.

Leaf miners, which include beetles, caterpillars, wasps, and flies, create tunnels or blotches on plant leaves or stems as they feed below the leaf surface and within the plant’s tissue. The native holly leaf miner (*Phytomyza ilicicola*), is actually the larval stage of a fly. This maggot overwinters in its leaf tunnel and emerges as an adult fly in early spring.

**Roman Holly-day**

The early Romans decorated their homes—particularly the fireplace—with holly during their celebration of the winter solstice. Romans knew the days were beginning to lengthen and they merrily celebrated “coming out of the darkness.” They believed holly would stop lightning and evil spirits from entering through the chimney.

There are over 280 *Ilex* in the Arboretum collection.

Take a look at the difference between *Ilex pedunculosa* ★ and *Ilex verticillata* ★★ when you’re near the Arborway Gate entrance.