



Photo © Duarte Frade / iNaturalist CC BY 4.0

NOT EVALUATED NE	DATA DEFICIENT DD	LEAST CONCERN LC	NEAR THREATENED NT	VULNERABLE VU	ENDANGERED EN	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED CR	EXTINCT IN THE WILD EW	EXTINCT EX
---------------------	----------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------	---------------



Amazing Species: Holly

The use of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) as a Christmas decoration has pagan origins. Druids, Celts and Romans all brought evergreens into their homes in the winter, believing them to ward off evil spirits and ensure the return of spring.

Another traditional use of the plant is medicinal: the leaves are diuretic, fever reducing and laxative and have been used to treat asthma, jaundice and rheumatism. Its pale, dense, and finely textured wood is also used, being particularly suited to ornamental carvings and decorative woodwork. Holly has the unusual ability to regrow damaged bark.

Widespread across Europe, North Africa and parts of western Asia, this species grows in a milder climate than most of the holly family, which largely occurs in the tropics. While it has no major threats, there are growing concerns that it may be adversely impacted by climate change in the Mediterranean region, where it has already started to move north due to drought.

In addition to continued monitoring across its range, more investigation into the threats facing Holly and its population trends outside of Europe would add to knowledge of this species. Many other *Ilex* species are in serious trouble in the wild and in need of urgent conservation action.



The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the [Red List Partnership](#) with the support of the [IUCN-Toyota Red List Partnership](#).

