



Is Holly Holy?

➤ HOLLY has been associated with the Feast of the Nativity for so many Christian generations that we have a tendency to ascribe a kind of holiness to the shrub itself. Indeed, its name is spelled "holy" in the first known written record in English, which dates from the middle of the twelfth century.

This, however, must be taken as simple coincidence, for "holy" and "holly" are really two quite distinct words, deriving from roots in the same early European language. "Holy" originally denoted wholeness, soundness, integrity. "Holly," despite its naive early spelling, comes

from "holen," which was the Anglo-Saxon name for the shrub itself, and has no religious or moral significance at all. Holly is still called "hollin" in the lowland Scots dialect. Another medieval spelling for holly was "hooley"—but that must not be taken as indicating a possible Irish source! The modern Irish word for holly is "cuilen," pronounced (approximately) "killen"; language students state that it comes from the same basic root-word as the Anglo-Saxon "holen."

Most of the holly offered in the holiday market in this country is the native American species, gathered wild in our woods. This is a pity, for harvesting methods are exceedingly crude and destructive, so that holly trees and bushes are becoming increasingly scarce in the neighborhood of cities in our eastern states. The situation has become so bad that in some states the unauthorized gathering of wild holly is forbidden by law, though enforcement of the statutes is rather uneven.

European holly, raised mostly in the Pacific Northwest, is also obtainable, though naturally at higher prices than the plundered native species. It is distinguished by the glossier sheen of its leaves, which are usually also more prickly than those of the American holly, and by its larger, brighter red berries. Some people buy little holly bushes and

keep them growing the year round.

Holly is used to a considerable extent in the parts of the country where it will grow, as a yard shrub and especially for hedges. Since holly flowers have distinct sexes, borne on different bushes or trees, it is important when planting it to make sure that your stock is the female or berry-producing kind. It used to be necessary to plant one male bush for every dozen or so female specimens, to insure berry-bearing through pollination. However, this is no longer necessary, since some of the recently discovered synthetic growth-control chemicals will cause unpollinated female flowers to develop berries.

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GEOGRAPHY

Atomic Proving Grounds in Pacific Resembles Bikini

➤ ENIWETOK atoll, designated by the Atomic Energy Commission as permanent mid-Pacific proving ground for atomic weapons, is excellently adapted for the purpose. Westernmost of the Marshall group, it is a couple of hundred miles due west of Bikini and about twice that distance northwest of Kwajalein; thus well isolated both for security purposes and for safety of other atolls from harmful by-products of atom-bomb explosions.

It resembles Bikini in both size and shape of its lagoon, which is roughly elliptical, with its greater axis about 20 miles in length and its shorter axis about 15. There is thus ample anchorage for all naval, auxiliary and target craft that may be needed. There is an excellent deep-water entrance—so good, indeed, that when the American amphibious attack was staged in mid-February of 1944, the whole convoy steamed right into the lagoon, with warships blasting Jap batteries into silence as they passed through the channel.

Although major air traffic will doubtless continue to make most use of the Pacific crossroads at Kwajalein, it is possible to land even large planes at Eniwetok. Even in war days, the Japs had a 4,000-foot airstrip, and this has been much improved. The Atomic Energy Commission statement indicates that there is more land surface here than at Bikini, which will make for more comfortable elbow-room, both for airplane landings and the setting up of test instruments.

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