

# Quercus ilex

*Holm Oak / Holly Oak*



**January 2012**

*Quercus ilex - leathery green foliage*

*Quercus ilex* is a variety of evergreen oak, growing to approximately 20-25m in height. Its tolerance of many growing conditions and pollution make it a very versatile plant, often used in urban and coastal settings. Alternatively it can be used for hedging, windbreaks and topiary. Left to grow on its own, it will become a large, structural tree with a rounded crown.

Catkins appear in the Spring, followed by small acorns which will mature the same year. The leaves are dark green and leathery with a whitish underside. Often the lower leaves are spiny, giving a resemblance to the Common Holly, which is also where the name comes from. It is thought that it may have developed this characteristic to prevent grazing by animals.

Native to the Mediterranean region and is often found growing on its own or with *Cedrus atlantica* in the Moroccan Atlas mountains.

## Plant Profile

**Name:** *Quercus ilex*

**Common Name:** Holm Oak or Holly Oak - Holm is the ancient word for Holly

**Family:** Fagaceae

**Height:** 20-25m

**Demands:** Tolerant of most conditions. Must be well drained soil

**Foliage:** Leathery, dark green, evergreen leaves with a whitish underside

**Bark:** Grey bark, smooth when young and becoming fissured with age.

**Fruit:** Small acorns



*20-25-30cm standards*

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**Deepdale**

*Quercus ilex has become one of the top three trees used for truffle orchards. The acorns are a major food source for the free range pigs which are reared to produce Iberico ham.*



*Quercus ilex acorns*



*Fissured bark*



*White underside of foliage*



*50-60cm girth standard*



*Quercus ilex in motion!*



*35-40cm girth standards*



*Cones and feathered plants*