

[open main page for all woods](#)[open page 2 for articles](#)

Euphonia / Laurie

HOLLY

*Ilex spp.**Ilex spp.* of the family Aquifoliaceae

There are many *Ilex* species in North America but I don't know how many of them product lumber that is sold as holly. Generally, you will see it listed as *Ilex opaca* but I don't know how reliable that is.

The tree is slow-growing and usually quite small, so the wood is rare, particularly in any substantial size, and it is likely to have knots which further reduces the sizes available for some applications. There are occasional trees that are up to 2 feet in diameter and 60 feet high, so there are, rarely, planks available. Many reports say that the tree has to be cut in winter, milled, and put into a kiln almost immediately and dried carefully or the wood will warp and/or develop serious blue-stain and/or turn gray which really ruins the white color that is this wood's claim to fame. BUT ... I am assured by a very knowledgeable sawyer in Illinois that you can cut it in summer and make it come out just fine IF you mill it the same day you cut the tree down and put it somewhere dry.

Fine-grained and nearly devoid of figure, this moderately expensive wood is used mostly for small objects. It is a terrific contrast-color wood that turns well, glues well, and works well in general.

Nemopanthus mucronatus (Mountain holly, among other names) has been reclassified and that name is now considered a synonym for *Ilex mucronata*.

my samples:

**NOTE: these pics were all taken in very bright incandescent lighting ("soft white" at 2700K)
colors will vary under other lighting conditions**

←————— 5" —————→