Red Sprite Winterberry

Ilex verticillata 'Red Sprite'



Red Sprite Winterberry fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Black Alder

Description:

A naturally dwarf deciduous holly with extremely colorful bright red berries throughout winter, requires a male pollinator; upright growth habit, suckers into colonies; requires moist to wet acidic soils, good for problem areas; excellent when massed

Ornamental Features

Red Sprite Winterberry is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries from mid fall to late winter. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The pointy leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color.



Red Sprite Winterberry fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Red Sprite Winterberry is a dense multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with a more or less rounded form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Red Sprite Winterberry is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Red Sprite Winterberry will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more. This is a female variety of the species which requires a male selection of the same species growing nearby in order to set fruit.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selection of a native North American species.