Japanese Holly
(*Ilex crenata*)

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**Summary:**
- **Foliage:** Evergreen broadleaf
- **Height:** 2 to 10 feet (depending on cultivar)
- **Spread:** 2 to 10 feet (depending on cultivar)
- **Shape:** Upright or low mound (depending on cultivar)

There are numerous cultivars of Japanese holly. Many are compact, mounded forms with small, spineless, dark-green leaves and black fruit. They are primarily used in mass for borders, backgrounds, and foundation plants.

**Plant Needs:**
- **Zone:** 6b to 8 (most, there are a few 6a cultivars)
- **Moisture:** Moist to dry
- **pH Range:** 3.7 to 6.8
- **Light:** Partial shade to full sun
- **Soil Type:** Sandy, loam, or clay

**Functions:**
Suggested uses for this plant include border, foundation, hedge and massing.

**Planting Notes:**
Make sure the cultivar you have selected is cold hardy in your area.

**Care:**
Tolerates severe pruning.  
Mulch to protect tender roots from freezing injury.

**Problems:**
Damage to plant from spider mites in hot, dry locations can be serious. Scale and nematodes are a problem in sandy soils.

**Alternatives:**
Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Cultivars of *Ilex crenata*:

- `Convexa' has dark-green, convex leaves. One of the hardiest forms, but is a heavy fruit producer. May reach 9 feet tall and 24 feet wide.
- `Helleri' is a compact form that reaches 4 feet at maturity.
- `Hetzii' a dwarf form of `Convexa'. Grows 8+ feet in height.
'Roundleaf' is a male selection that does not produce berries. It is more subject to winter injury. Will grow 5 to 10 feet tall and 5 to 12 feet wide. 'Soft Touch' forms a 3 foot tall mound with pliable branches. There are over 60 cultivars of Japanese holly with variations in size, form, & foliage characteristics.

**Comments:**
Japanese holly is a versatile evergreen shrub with varied uses depending on the cultivar. Select cultivar with a mature height and cold hardiness that is appropriate to location to avoid the need for frequent pruning and low temperature damage, respectively.

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