

By the end of December trees should be 1.5 to 2 m high. Once shoot growth is 2 m high it is topped; this causes the tree to start branching at a good height. Lower branching is not always desirable as the branches can have large thorns and be hazardous.

Grafting *Ilex dipyrena*—How to Repeat Beginners Luck!

Steuart Welch

Cannock Wood Nursery, RD. 2, Warrens Road, Marton

BACKGROUND

Ilex dipyrena is a rather distinctive and handsome species among the many in our collection of 40 plus holly species and cultivars at Cannock Wood Nursery. This large shrub to small tree species, is native to the Himalayas. Although it is not a great garden centre plant there is a demand for it from plant collectors who have seen it growing in the wild, as well as those who see it in our collection. We grew our plant from cuttings taken from Eastwoodhill in April 1976. That attempt involved about 12 cuttings which produced about 4 to 5 trees. At that time I was a novice so records were non-existent except for the labels on the bench. One tree was planted in our garden and has grown to approximately 3 m by 1993. Further attempts at propagation have been fruitless, or maybe I should say plantless, which is frustrating as the cutting material looks perfect. The cuttings just sit and callus but no roots! Hence my paper title of how to repeat beginners luck! As with all my holly propagation, I use Seradix No.3 - Hardwood and have also tried Liba 10000 at 1 part to 3 parts of water. Some cuttings have gone on bottom heat, some without, and some outside behind the shed—but no plants.

THINGS I HAVE HEARD

Two thoughts come to mind before I carry on. First, years ago I read—I do not know where—about a strange habit which hollies have that appears to make them different from other plants. The second is a belief that older trees give better cutting material than very young trees. This second idea came from a fellow nurseryman. I had given him some cuttings and 2 years later he offered me a plant. I said that I had a tree, I just wanted to know how to grow more. His observation was that all the cuttings with flower buds failed, while all that succeeded had none. So this year I have tried again with all this in mind. Cuttings were taken in mid June with particular attention to flower buds. Four months later some have callused, most are green, and in basic language they are looking good. However, roots have not been forthcoming in time for the I.P.P.S conference. They will not hurry for propagator or publisher so maybe I should give some more cuttings away.