INKBERRY HOLLY CARE

LIGHT

Inkberry (Ilex glabra) grows in full sun to partial shade. Choose a site where light reaches the lower branches if a dense outline is wanted. Leave space for the cultivar's natural width rather than relying on repeated shearing to keep it in a narrow strip.

WATER

Keep newly planted roots evenly moist. Inkberry tolerates moist and occasionally wet soil better than many other hollies, but a container must still drain. Check established shrubs during extended drought. Water deeply at the root zone instead of giving frequent shallow sprinkles.

SOIL & PLANTING

Use acidic soil and plant at the nursery root-flare level. Avoid planting deeply or banking mulch around the stems. A light mulch over the roots helps limit drying. Inkberry can spread by suckers, so allow room for a colony or remove unwanted shoots carefully.

FEEDING

Base feeding on soil-test results and plant vigor. Yellow leaves may indicate unsuitable soil pH or root conditions rather than a simple fertilizer shortage. Do not add lime routinely. Keep fertilizers off the foliage and stem bases, and follow the labeled rate for shrubs.

SEASONAL CARE

Little pruning is usually needed. If shaping is necessary, prune in early spring before new growth. Selectively thin or shorten stems rather than repeatedly clipping only the outside into a dense shell. Remove dead branches and unwanted suckers, keeping healthy lower foliage exposed to light.

HELPFUL TIPS

Inkberry is an evergreen holly with black fruit, distinct from deciduous winterberry and spiny blue holly. Female plants need a compatible male inkberry for berries. Older shrubs may become open at the base. Identify the cause of thinning before trying severe pruning, and do not eat the berries.