# Sky Sentry Japanese Holly

***Ilex crenata 'Sky Sentry'***

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Sky Pencil Japanese Holly, Box-leaved Holly

**Description:**

Prized for its narrow, towering form, this shrub makes a bold statement when planted in a container or as a focal point; glossy leaves and abundant black berries during winter; perfect for smaller landscapes



*Sky Sentry Japanese Holly*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

**Ornamental Features**

Sky Sentry Japanese Holly is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent black berries in late fall. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The small glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter.

**Landscape Attributes**

Sky Sentry Japanese Holly is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a narrowly upright and columnar growth habit. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds and bees to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Sky Sentry Japanese Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Vertical Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



*Sky Sentry Japanese Holly foliage*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

## Planting & Growing

Sky Sentry Japanese Holly will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

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 may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Sky Sentry Japanese Holly makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.