



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Eugenia axillaris*¹

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Introduction

White Stopper is well known for its interesting, earthy fragrance. These evergreen small trees or large shrubs grow to about 25 feet and serve many purposes in the landscape. They are native to sandy coastal areas. The small, opposite leaves emerge bright red turning a medium green several weeks later. White or cream-yellow flowers have numerous, showy stamens that are yellow in color. These flowers occur in axillary clusters during the warm months, but they abscise quickly. The edible fruits are drupe-like, juicy berries that are globose or pear-shaped and very showy.

General Information

Scientific name: *Eugenia axillaris*

Pronunciation: yoo-JEE-nee-uh ack-sil-LAIR-riss

Common name(s): White Stopper

Family: *Myrtaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: residential street tree; near a deck or patio; superior hedge; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 8 to 15 feet

Plant habit: oval; irregular outline or silhouette

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: globose

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: red; black
Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption; attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: showy; no thorns
Current year stem/twig color: brown
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Stoppers may be used in the landscape as hedges, borders, accents, or screens. They are excellent for confined soil spaces due to their small size. They can be used as foundation plantings if regularly clipped. Eugenia species are also exceptional understory shrubs or small trees and make interesting specimen plants due to the showy trunk structure. They maintain a nice canopy in a shaded landscape. Remove lower branches to develop a nice small, multi-trunked tree.

Stoppers grow well in a variety of light levels and they tolerate different types of well-drained soils. These plants are salt and drought tolerant.

Stoppers are easily propagated by seed.

Pests and Diseases

The Stoppers are bothered by chewing insects, caterpillars, and scale.