



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Eugenia foetida*¹

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Introduction

Spanish Stopper grows in south Florida on limestone soils in hardwood hammocks as an understory tree. However, it is perfectly adapted to more open, sunny locations where it will flourish with little care once it becomes established. Reddish twigs bear tiny green leaves and berries less than 1/4 inch diameter. Several stems arise from the lower part of the tree forming a multiple trunked tree well adapted for many landscapes.

General Information

Scientific name: *Eugenia foetida*

Pronunciation: yoo-JEE-nee-uh FET-tid-uh

Common name(s): Spanish Stopper, Box-Leaf Eugenia

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: 12 to 20 feet

Spread: 8 to 15 feet

Plant habit: vase shape; oval

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: none, or difficult to see

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: white

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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: reddish

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

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

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

Use and Management

The smooth, brown to grey, mottled bark and tight canopy of fine-textured leaves makes Spanish Stopper well suited for planting as a specimen in any yard. Old bark exfoliates showing fresh, smooth orange bark below. It is commonly used as a hedge due to the small leaves and branchiness. Trees can be trained in the nursery to one central trunk or allowed and encouraged to develop multiple trunks. They create shade for a patio or deck, but will not grow to the large, often overpowering size of a large tree such as a Fig. They are often used along streets, in highway medians and in parking lots because they adapt to small soil spaces and do not become very large. Street and parking lot trees are often specified to have one trunk to allow for vehicle clearance beneath the crown.

Multiple trunked trees are often specified for specimen planting so the beautiful bark can be displayed.

Plants are adapted to most soils from acidic to alkaline. Once they are established in the landscape, they require little care.

Pests and Diseases

There are no major problems growing this tree.