



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Eugenia rhombea*¹

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Introduction

Red Stopper grows in south Florida on limestone soils in coastal uplands 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. Several stems arise from the lower part of the tree forming a multiple trunked tree well adapted for many landscapes. Older trees grow to about 20 feet tall and wide.

General Information

Scientific name: *Eugenia rhombea*

Pronunciation: yoo-JEE-nee-uh ROM-bee-uh

Common name(s): Red Stopper, Spiceberry

Family: *Myrtaceae*

Plant type: tree

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

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: trained as a standard; hedge; near a deck or patio; 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: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Plant habit: oval

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

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: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red; black

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

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 Red Stopper well suited for planting as a specimen in any yard. 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.

Plants are adapted to most well-drained soils from slightly acidic to alkaline. Soils in their native habitat are sandy with shell fragments and a surface layer of accumulated organic matter. Once they are established in the landscape, they require little care. Red Stopper is an endangered plant in Florida.

Pests and Diseases

There are no major problems growing this tree.