



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Savia bahamensis¹

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Introduction

Maidenbush is a small leaved, compact, native shrub with some resemblance to *Cocoplum* (Fig. 1). This 6- to 10-foot-tall euphorb has pretty, oval green leaves that are folded toward each other along the long stems. When the new growth of this plant emerges it is a bright red color. The fruits and flowers of the Maidenbush are not the “stars of the show” but are small and inconspicuous; the foliage is the real attraction. This shrub makes a great specimen plant and is suitable for coastal landscapes.

General Information

Scientific name: *Savia bahamensis*

Pronunciation: SAY-vee-uh bah-hah-MEN-sis

Common name(s): Maidenbush

Family: *Euphorbiaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: hedge; specimen; screen

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

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

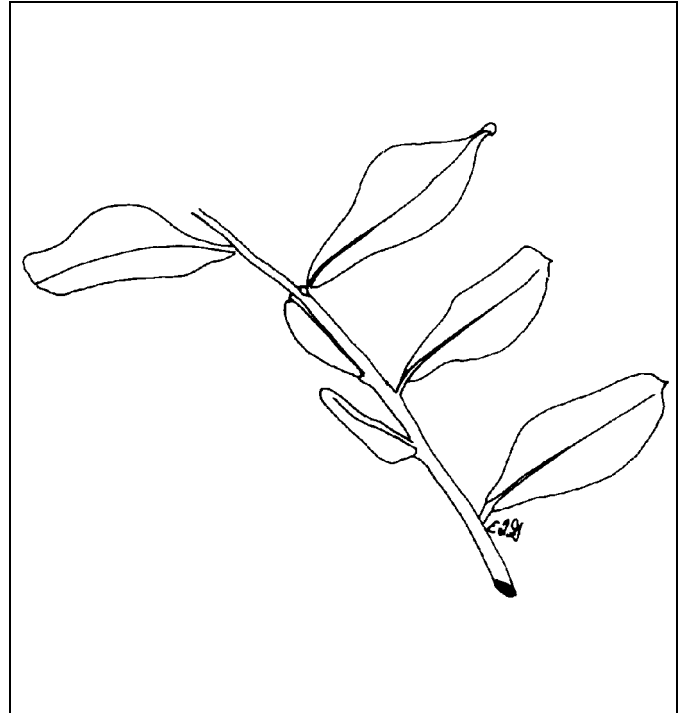


Figure 1. Maidenbush.

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: spatulate
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: green
Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy

Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly 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: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Maidenbush will thrive on dry sandy soils in full or partial sun. Maidenbush is a drought tolerant plant, but it may be damaged by cold weather in areas north of Vero Beach. Native soil is fairly well drained in the coastal upland plant communities. Soil pH in its native habitat is slightly alkaline or neutral.

Pests and Diseases

There are no major problems growing Maidenbush.