**Introduction**

Barbados Cherry develops into a thick, rounded canopy of fairly delicate foliage (Fig. 1). Small pink flowers appear periodically from April to October and are followed about one month later by bright red, tart-tasting, 1-inch fruits which are extremely high in vitamin C. It is commonly available in nurseries throughout south Florida.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Malpighia glabra*
- **Pronunciation:** mal-PIG-ee-uh GLAY-bruh
- **Common name(s):** Barbados Cherry
- **Family:** *Malpighiaceae*
- **Plant type:** tree
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Planting month for zone 9:** year round
- **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** specimen; container or above-ground planter; border; hedge; near a deck or patio; screen
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

**Description**

- **Height:** 10 to 12 feet
- **Spread:** 10 to 15 feet
- **Plant habit:** round
- **Plant density:** moderate
- **Growth rate:** slow

- **Texture:** medium
- **Foliage**
  - **Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite
  - **Leaf type:** simple
  - **Leaf margin:** entire
  - **Leaf shape:** lanceolate

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption; persists on the plant; attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

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

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

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
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: long-term health usually not affected by pests
Use and Management

This open, upright, evergreen shrub grows at a slow pace to 12 feet tall and wide, making it well-suited as a foundation planting for larger buildings or used in the rear of the shrubbery border. Trained to numerous multitrunks, it can be used as a small accent tree just as Japanese Ligustrum is used. The multitrunks rise sinuously up through the crown creating a sculptured specimen well-suited for placing near a patio, deck or entry way to attract attention. It looks great lighted at night from below the tree.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Barbados Cherry needs fertile, nematode-free soil and is not salt-tolerant. Plant 5 to 6 feet apart for a mass planting or to develop a tall, thick screen.

Propagation is by layering or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Pests include nematodes, whiteflies, scale, and plant bugs which will attack and deform the fruit.