



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Byrsonima lucida*¹

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Introduction

This low, spreading, evergreen shrub has a unique character (Fig. 1). In the pinelands of Florida where nutrients are not abundant, it will grow to a height of 1 foot. However, it can reach a height of 8 to 10 feet in the hammocks where soils are richer. The branching habit of the Locustberry is quite irregular, and the shrub is often a host to epiphytes. The spring flowers of this plant occur in clusters and change colors with time. These flowers turn from white to pink and from pink to crimson. The beautiful colors of the flowers attract different species of butterflies. The oil glands on the underside of the petals also change color and turn from green to yellow.

General Information

Scientific name: *Byrsonima lucida*

Pronunciation: bur-SO-nim-uh LOO-sid-uh

Common name(s): Locustberry

Family: *Malpighiaceae*

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: reclamation plant; screen; border; attracts butterflies

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

Description

Height: 12 to 20 feet

Spread: 15 to 30 feet

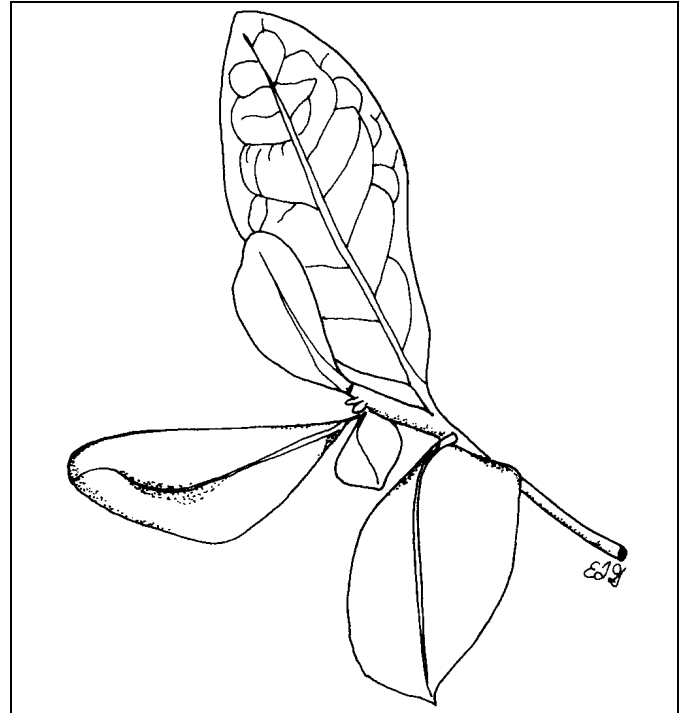


Figure 1. Locustberry.

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: obovate; spatulate
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: pink; yellow
Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: green; red
Fruit characteristic: attracts birds; persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; occasionally wet; slightly alkaline; sand; loam;
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: good
Plant spacing: not applicable

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Fruits of the Locustberry ripen in the summer and are appealing to mockingbirds and other forms of wildlife. This plant can also take on an Oriental or bonsai appearance with the proper pruning.

Byrsonima lucida requires a position in the landscape that receives full sun. It is adapted to different, well-drained soils and is very drought tolerant. It is an endangered plant in Florida.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.