Chiococca pinetorum

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Introduction

Chiococca pinetorum (parvifolia) is a handsome, low scrambling shrub that can reach a height of 10 feet if given a support to climb upon (Fig. 1). It climbs into neighboring trees and shrubs in the wild. The leathery leaves of the Snowberry are evergreen, shiny, and dark green in color. They are smaller than C. alba. White or purple-white, tubular flowers are found in the leaf axil and occur in 3-inch-long racemes or panicles. Each raceme or panicle is tipped with 6 to 8 of the flowers, and these flowers turn from white to yellow with time. The common name used for this shrub refers to the large, ovoid, sparkling white fruits that follow the delightful flowers.

General Information

Scientific name: Chiococca pinetorum
Pronunciation: kye-oh-KOE-kuh pye-net-TOR-um
Common name(s): Pineland Snowberry
Family: Rubiaceae
Plant type: ground cover
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: espalier; mass planting; foundation; ground cover
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Foliage
Height: 2 to 3 feet
Spread: 3 to 6 feet

Figure 1. Pineland Snowberry.

Plant habit: spreading; round
Plant density: open
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Chiococca pinetorum -- Pineland Snowberry

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: entire  
Leaf shape: ovate  
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: white; white-purple  
Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: round  
Fruit length: less than .5 inch  
Fruit cover: fleshy  
Fruit color: white  
Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

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; alkaline; sand; 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: not particularly outstanding  
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive  
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

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Use and Management

This plant may be used as a tall ground cover in a partially shaded or sunny location. Plants blend together making a loose mass of foliage several years after planting on 4- to 5-foot centers.

The Snowberry is a shrub that needs a well-drained soil. It will grow well on sandy loam soils and can tolerate dry conditions. This plant can be found near coastal areas throughout Florida and will usually survive without care once it becomes established.

Chewing insects may occasionally be a problem for *Chiococca alba*.