Eugenia rhombea

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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
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

**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

**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

**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.