



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Myrcianthes fragrans*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This member of the Eucalyptus family is an attractive, hardy tropical. It was once known as *Eugenia simpsonii*. It may be a large shrub or small tree and can reach a height of 20 feet with a 15 foot spread. The tiny, deep green leaves contain aromatic oils with the fragrance of nutmeg and grow densely, when in full sun, on the smooth-barked branches. When this plant is grown in shade the foliage becomes less dense, and the trunk displays its attractive, smooth, exfoliating bark. Twinberry has fragrant, white flowers that grow in long panicles which occur periodically throughout the year. These flowers then develop into attractive, red berries that are edible. The flowers attract many species of butterflies, and the fruits are appealing to birds, especially the state bird of Florida, the mockingbird.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Myrcianthes fragrans*

**Pronunciation:** mer-see-ANTH-eez FRAY-granz

**Common name(s):** Simpson's Stopper, Twinberry

**Family:** *Myrtaceae*

**Plant type:** tree

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 1)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** 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); trained as a standard; mass planting; screen; attracts butterflies

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### Description

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 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:** elliptic (oval)

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** fragrant

**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:** pleasant fragrance; flowers periodically throughout the year

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red

**Fruit characteristic:** suited for human consumption; attracts birds

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; no thorns; showy

**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**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**

Twinberry performs well with little or no irrigation once it becomes established. It is useful in roadway medians, along unmaintained highways or in buffer strips around parking lots. It can be trimmed into a nice multi-trunked small tree for use near a deck or patio to provide shade to a small area. This configuration shows off the bark nicely.

Twinberry can grow in full sun or deep shade and is most useful where the soils contain shell, marl, or lime rock (alkaline soils). This plant will tolerate wet soils but is also drought

tolerant. It shears well, has a high salt tolerance, and is hardy to about 25 F. Native habitat in Florida is the coastal upland forests with sandy soil containing shells and a neutral to slightly alkaline pH.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.