

Eugenia spp.: Stopper¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

Introduction

Eugenia is a large group of plants, some native and some non-native, including evergreen trees and shrubs, some of which have been reclassified to the genus *Syzygium*. The evergreen leaves are firm and glossy, and the flowers white. It is the dried buds of *Eugenia aromatica* (*Syzygium aromaticum*) which become the fragrant "herb" cloves. The flowers are followed by the production of berries, some types of which are edible. All these traits - the attractive foliage, flowers, and berries - help make *Eugenia* a popular landscape choice in warm climate areas, such as California, Florida, and Hawaii. *Eugenia confusa* (Ironwood, Red Stopper) is native to Florida and grows to about 35 feet and is well suited for street tree and parking lot planting. *Eugenia foetida* (Spanish Stopper) is also native and grows to about 15 feet tall.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Eugenia* spp.: Stopper
Credit: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Eugenia* spp.

Pronunciation: yoo-JEE-nee-uh species

Common name(s): Stopper, *Eugenia*

Family: *Myrtaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: According to the IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's

Natural Areas (Fox *et al.* 2005), *Eugenia uniflora* (Surinam cherry) may be used northern and central zones of Florida (counties are listed by zone at: <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/>). It is not documented in undisturbed areas in the northern zone and so is not considered to be a problem species; has been found in natural areas in the central zone and there *E. uniflora* should be treated with caution and managed to prevent its escape. In the southern counties of Florida, this species is invasive and not recommended for use (but to see if exceptions for specified and limited use have been approved since publication, check the Conclusions table at: <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/>).

Uses: tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; street without sidewalk; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; reclamation; trained as a standard; container or planter; deck or patio; hedge; screen; specimen; highway median; shade

Availability: not native to North America

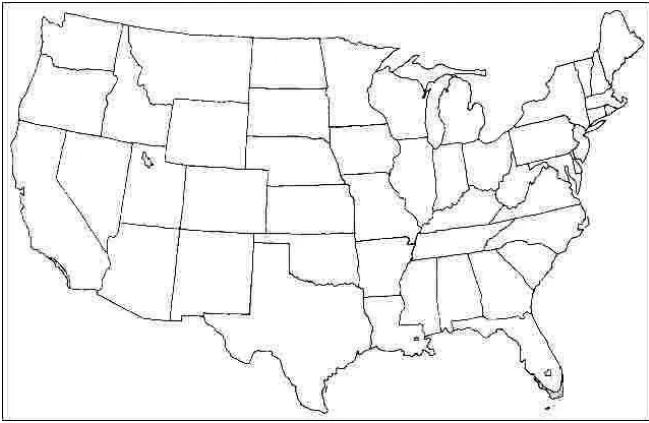


Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 15 to 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: upright/erect, vase, oval

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

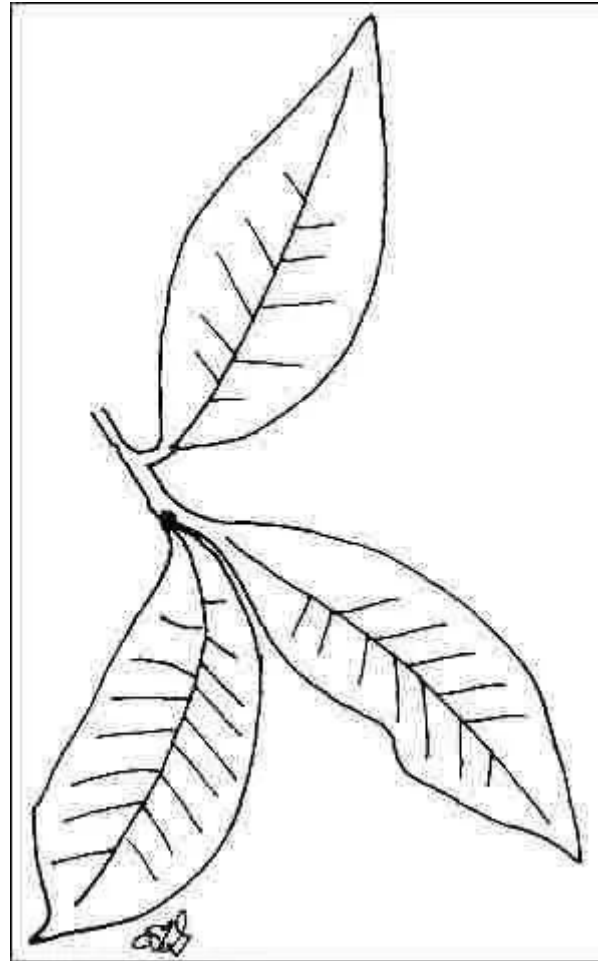


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red, black

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

The smooth, brown to grey, mottled bark and tight canopy of fine-textured leaves make *Eugenia* 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 *Ficus* tree. 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 so the beautiful bark can be displayed.

Eugenia should be grown in full sun or part shade on well-drained soil. Once established in the landscape, they are drought-tolerant, requiring little, if any, irrigation.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pests

Psyllids limit the tree's usefulness in parts of California.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.

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² Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus, Department of Environmental Horticulture; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, UF/IFAS Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Gainesville, FL; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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