Introduction
Barbados cherry develops into a thick, rounded canopy of fairly delicate foliage (Fig. 1). Small pink flowers appear periodically from April to October and are followed about one month later by bright red, tart-tasting, 1-inch fruits which are extremely high in vitamin C. It is commonly available in nurseries throughout south Florida.

General Information
Scientific name: *Malpighia glabra*
Common name(s): Barbados cherry
Family: Malpighiaceae
Plant type: tree
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America

Uses: specimen; container or above-ground planter; border; hedge; near a deck or patio; screen
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Figure 1. Barbados cherry

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description
Height: 10 to 12 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 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: lanceolate  
Leaf venation: pinnate  
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no fall color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**  
Flower color: pink  
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

**Fruit**  
Fruit shape: round  
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch  
Fruit cover: fleshy  
Fruit color: red  
Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption; persists on the plant; attracts birds

Figure 3. Fruit of Barbados cherry

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

**Culture**  
Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun  
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; 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: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive  
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**  
This open, upright, evergreen shrub grows at a slow pace to 12 feet tall and wide, making it well-suited as a foundation planting for larger buildings or used in the rear of the shrubbery border. Trained to numerous multitrunks, it can be used as a small accent tree just as Japanese ligustrum is used. The multitrunks rise sinuously up through the crown creating a sculptured specimen well-suited for placing near a patio, deck or entry way to attract attention. It looks great lighted at night from below the tree.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Barbados cherry needs fertile, nematode-free soil and is not salt-tolerant.

Plant 5 to 6 feet apart for a mass planting or to develop a tall, thick screen.

Propagation is by layering or cuttings.

**Pests and Diseases**  
Pests include nematodes, whiteflies, scale, and plant bugs, which will attack and deform the fruit.