

# *Eugenia axillaris* White Stopper<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

White stopper is well known for its interesting, earthy fragrance. These evergreen small trees or large shrubs grow to about 25 feet and serve many purposes in the landscape. They are native to sandy coastal areas. The small, opposite leaves emerge bright red, turning a medium green several weeks later. White or cream-yellow flowers have numerous, showy, yellow stamens. These flowers occur in axillary clusters during the warm months, but they abscise quickly. The edible fruits are drupe-like, juicy berries that are globose or pear-shaped and very showy.



Figure 1. Leaf - *Eugenia axillaris*: White Stopper  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

## General Information

**Pronunciation:** yoo-JEE-nee-uh ack-sil-LAIR-riss

**Common name(s):** white stopper

**Family:** *Myrtaceae*

**Plant type:** tree

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Figure 2)

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

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Uses:** residential street tree; near a deck or patio; superior hedge; 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:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 15 to 25 feet

**Spread:** 8 to 15 feet

**Plant habit:** oval; irregular outline or silhouette

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval)

**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:** yellow

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** globose

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

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red; black

**Fruit characteristic:** suited for human consumption

## 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

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Stoppers may be used in the landscape as hedges, borders, accents, or screens. They are excellent for confined soil spaces due to their small size. They can be used as foundation plantings if regularly clipped. *Eugenia* species are also exceptional understory shrubs or small trees and make interesting specimen plants due to the showy trunk structure. They maintain a nice canopy in a shaded landscape. Remove lower branches to develop a nice small, multi-trunked tree.

Stoppers grow well in a variety of light levels and they tolerate different types of well-drained soils. These plants are salt and drought tolerant.

Stoppers are easily propagated by seed.

## **Pests and Diseases**

Stoppers are bothered by chewing insects, caterpillars, and scale.