

Eugenia rhombea Red Stopper, Spiceberry¹

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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.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Eugenia rhombea*: Red Stopper, Spiceberry
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf and Flower - *Eugenia rhombea*: Red Stopper, Spiceberry
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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 (Figure 3)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

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Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

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

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.

Pest and Diseases

There are no major problems growing this tree.