Eugenia spp.
Stopper

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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 (Fig. 1). The evergreen leaves are firm and glossy, and the flowers white. It is the dried buds of Eugenia aromatic (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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Eugenia spp.
Pronunciation: yoo-JEE-nee-uh species
Common name(s): Stopper, Eugenia
Family: Myrtaceae
USDA hardness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; screen; trainable as a standard; shade tree;
narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Middle-aged Stopper.
DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 30 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: oval; upright; vase shape
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
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 fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: black; red
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: seeds itself into the landscape

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The smooth, brown to grey, mottled bark and tight canopy of fine-textured leaves makes 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.