

# *Eugenia uniflora* L.



**Common Name:** Surinam cherry, cayenne cherry

**Synonymy:** *E. michelii* Lam.

**Origin:** Brazil

**Botanical Description:** Evergreen, multibranched shrub or small tree to 10 m (30 ft) tall, usually shrub size in Florida; young stems often with red hairs and dark red new foliage. Leaves opposite, simple, short petioled, oval to lance shaped, 2.5-8 cm (1-3 in) long, shiny dark green above, paler below; margins entire. Flowers white, fragrant, about 13 mm (0.5 in) across, with many stamens; occurring solitary or in clusters of 2 or 3 at leaf axils. Fruit a fleshy, juicy, orange red berry to 4 cm (1.5 in) wide, depressed globose, conspicuously 8-ribbed, with 1-3 seeds.

**NOTE:** Differs from native *Eugenia* species (stoppers) by having relatively larger fruit and at least some flowers solitary at the leaf axils.

**Ecological Significance:** Introduced for ornament and edible fruit before 1931 (Stennis 1931, Gordon and Thomas 1997). Widely planted in central and south Florida, especially for hedges (Maxwell and Maxwell 1961, Watkins 1970). Noted as escaping cultivation and invading hammocks in south central and south Florida (Long and Lakela 1971, Tomlinson 1980, Wunderlin 1982). Has invaded Miami-Dade and Broward County hammocks in high numbers, becoming a target of eradication by park managers (M. McMahon, Biological and Environmental Consulting, 1995 pers. comm.). Forms thickets in hammocks in the Bahamas (Correll and Correll 1982). Also listed as invasive in Hawaii (Wester 1992). Considered

weedy in cultivated landscapes (Broschat and Meerow 1991), not recommended (Nelson 1996). Reported from over 20 Florida natural areas, including national wildlife refuges and rare scrub habitat (FLEPPC 2002).

**Distribution:** Widely grown in tropical regions (Bailey and Bailey 1976). Escaped from cultivation also in the Virgin Islands (Little and Wadsworth 1964). Commonly naturalized in Miami-Dade County (Lakela and Craighead 1965). In Florida, documented as invading coastal hammocks, shell mounds, mesic hammocks, strand swamps, cabbage palm hammocks, and ruderal communities. Documented by herbarium specimens in 14 counties as far north as Pinellas and Brevard counties through the southern peninsular counties to the Keys (Wunderlin and Hansen 2004). Has also been reported in natural areas from Highlands County (FLEPPC 2005).

**Life History:** Hardy into central Florida and adaptable to all soil conditions not subject to flooding (Sturrock 1959). Freezes at about -1°C (30°F); grows moderately fast; can be easily pruned; has fair salt tolerance (Maxwell and Maxwell 1961). Flowers and fruits primarily in spring, with sometimes a second crop in the fall. Fruits eaten fresh or used in preserves (Stennis 1931). Plants visited daily by birds during the fruiting season (Stresau 1986). Fruits probably also eaten by small mammals. Propagated for cultivation by seed (Broschat and Meerow 1991). Also known as a general host for the Mediterranean fruit fly (Weems 1981).