

Promising Eugenia & Syzygium for Southern California



Eugenia & Syzygium

- *Eugenia* is a large genus of evergreen trees and shrubs that belongs to the Myrtaceae family.
- Besides *Eugenia*, the Myrtaceae family also includes other well known genera such as *Acca* (Pineapple Guava), *Myrciaria* (Jaboticaba, etc.), *Pimenta* (Allspice, etc.), *Psidium* (Guava) and *Syzygium* (Rose Apple, Malay Apple, Wax Jambu, etc.).
- Several species of the genus *Syzygium* were formerly classified as *Eugenia* and many references may still list these species as *Eugenia*.
- Most *Eugenia* species originated from America and the West Indies whereas *Syzygium* species originated from the Indo-Malaysian region.

Eugenia & Syzygium

- The fruit of the promising *Eugenia* & *Syzygium* species range in size from one to five inches in diameter and all have persistent sepals which remain attached to the apex of the fruit.
- Seeds are usually moderate to small in size in relationship to the fruit size and range in number from one to as many as four per fruit. The fruit are commonly eaten fresh, or used in jams, jellies and juices.
- In most cases, improved varieties of these species have not been selected, and much potential exists for the development of better fruiting varieties with superior fruit characteristics.
- Propagation of all of the species of *Eugenia* is commonly by seed. Large variations exist in the productivity and fruit quality among seedlings. Average time from seed to fruiting plants can range from as little as 3-4 years to as many as 7 years or more.
- There has been some successful propagation by grafting, cuttings and air-layering. Not all species of *Eugenia* are successfully propagated by all of these methods at this time, and variations in successful asexual propagation methods are common.

Eugenia aggregata

Cherry of the Rio Grande

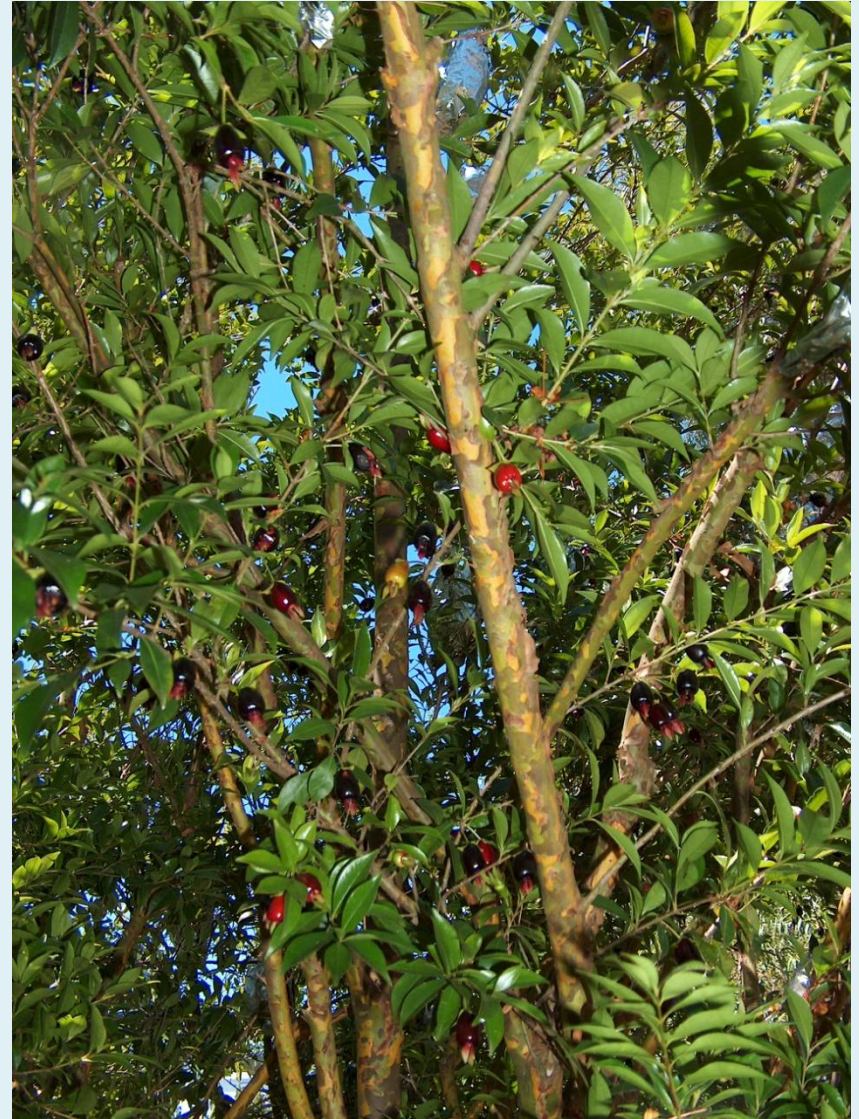
- An evergreen large shrub or small tree to 20-25 feet. Can be kept to as small as 6 feet with pruning.
- Cold hardy to approximately 20 degrees.
- Propagation is generally by seed or air-layers.



Eugenia aggregata

Cherry of the Rio Grande

- The tree has a beautiful mottled trunk which is the result of the thin bark that peels away as the tree grows.
- Once established, the Cherry of the Rio Grande is fairly drought tolerant. It has no significant pests or diseases.



Eugenia aggregata

Cherry of the Rio Grande

- Small white flowers are produced mid-spring. Fruit ripen approximately 30 days after flowering.



Eugenia aggregata

Cherry of the Rio Grande

- Sweet cherry-like fruit ripen in late spring or early summer.
- Fruit are dark purple-black when fully ripe and will be slightly sweeter when they are slightly shriveled.
- Fruit generally have 1-3 seeds.



Eugenia aggregata

Cherry of the Rio Grande

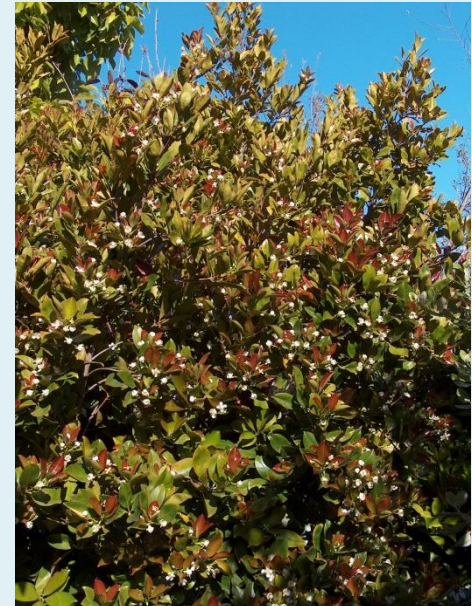
- Trees are self-fruitful and productive. There is some variation in fruit size and quality among seedlings.
- Occasionally branch die-back is observed on trees, although the cause of this is still not known. This does not generally threaten the life of the tree.



Eugenia dombeyi (*E. brasiliensis*)

Grumichama

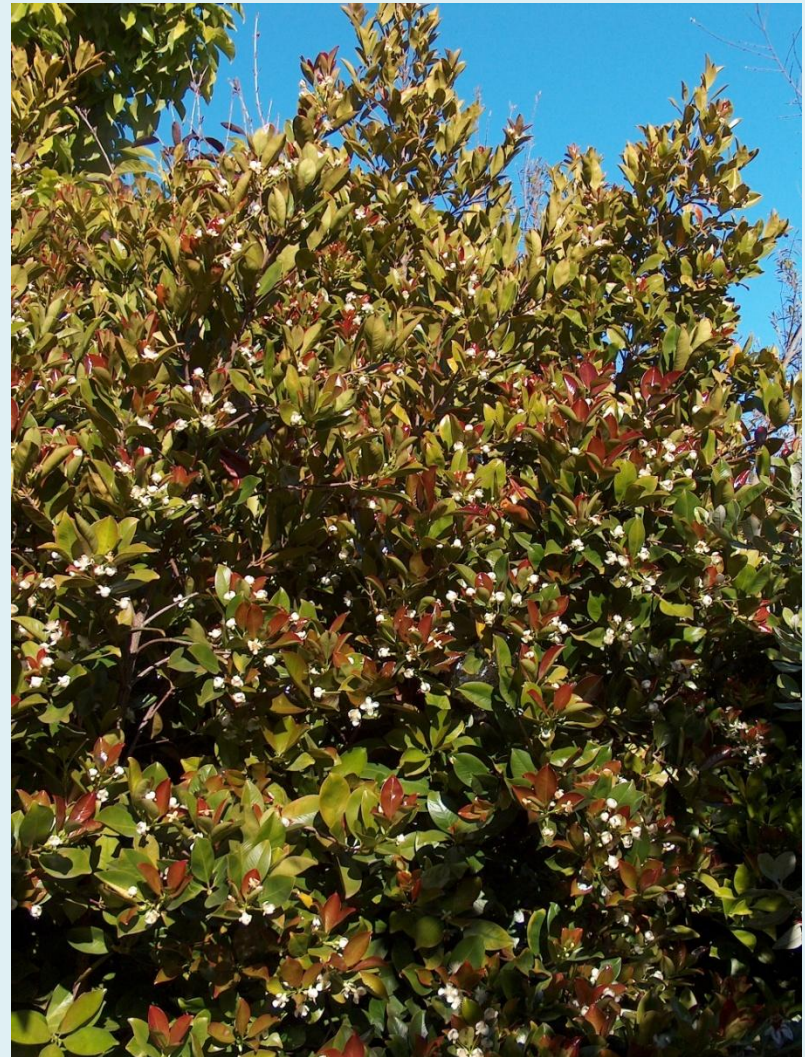
- Shrub or small tree to approximately 15 feet. Can be kept to 6 feet or smaller with pruning.
- Cold hardy to 26 degrees.
- Propagation is generally by seed or air-layers.
- The grumichama has no significant pests or diseases.



Eugenia dombeyi (*E. brasiliensis*)

Grumichama

- New foliage is deep wine red in color.
- Older leaves mature to a glossy dark green color.



Eugenia dombeyi (*E. brasiliensis*)

Grumichama

- Abundant 1 inch white flowers occur in late spring.
- Occasionally a second flowering and fruiting will occur in late summer.



Eugenia dombeyi (*E. brasiliensis*)

Grumichama

- Dark purple-red 1 inch fruit is considered the best tasting of the cherry-like fruit.
- Fruit is also known as the Brazilian Cherry.



Eugenia dombeyi (*E. brasiliensis*)

Grumichama

- A orange fruited form is also known, however this is much less common.



Eugenia jambolana (Syzygium Cumini)

Jambolan / Java Plum

- Large tree up to 40'-50' or more.
- Hardy to at least 26 F.
- There is much interest in its medicinal qualities and all parts of the Java Plum can be used medicinally.
- Propagation is by seed, grafting and air-layers.



Eugenia jambolana (Syzygium Cumini)

Jambolan / Java Plum

- New growth has pinkish color which matures to a dark green.
- The flowers are slightly fragrant. Flowering generally occurs in March – April.
- The fruit has a tough skin and may be very astringent, sometimes unpalatably so.



Eugenia jambolana (Syzygium Cumini)

Jambolan / Java Plum

- Oval 1"-1 1/2" crimson black fruit generally ripen mid-summer.
- There is much variability in fruit quality but generally the fruit is juicy but astringent with a flavor that ranges from acid to fairly sweet.



Eugenia jambos (*Syzygium jambos*)

Rose Apple

- A large shrub or small tree to 20 feet with a semi-weeping growth habit. Easily trained as an espalier or pruned as an informal hedge or screen.
- Cold hardy to about 26 degrees.



Eugenia jambos (*Syzygium jambos*)

Rose Apple

- New growth is a deep wine red that fades to a lovely pink and finally darkens to a dark green as the foliage matures.
- The rose apple has no significant pests or diseases.



Eugenia jambos (*Syzygium jambos*)

Rose Apple

- Creamy white flowers are quite showy and are produced throughout the late spring and summer.
- The seed is polyembryonic and the rose apple is generally propagated by seed.



Eugenia jambos (*Syzygium jambos*)

Rose Apple

- Pale green or yellowish fruit is the size of a ping pong ball and the edible portion of the fruit forms a hollow shell around the seeds.
- The fruit is mild in flavor and tastes like roses smell.
- The fruit makes a wonderful jam or jelly.

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Eugenia javanica (*Syzygium samarangense*)

Wax Jambu

- Large shrub or small tree to approximately 20-25 feet.
- Frost sensitive. Should be protected from temperatures below 32 degrees F.
- Propagation is generally by air-layers.



Eugenia javanica (*Syzygium samarangense*)

Wax Jambu

- The new growth has a lovely pinkish tinge which fades to dark green as the leaves mature.
- A psyllid will occasionally cause pock-like depressions on the leaves.



Eugenia javanica (*Syzygium samarangense*)

Wax Jambu

- Flowers occur in late spring, are yellowish-white and are very showy.
- The flowers and resulting fruit are not limited to the axils of the leaves and can appear on nearly any point on the surface of the trunk and branches.



Eugenia javanica (*Syzygium samarangense*)

Wax Jambu

- The fruit is a bell-shaped edible berry, with colors ranging from white, pale green, green, red, purple, crimson, to deep purple or even blackish.
- The flavor is mild and somewhat watery but very refreshing. The fruit has a crisp texture with spongy center.



Eugenia javanica (*Syzygium samarangense*)

Wax Jambu

- Fruit ripen in late summer.
- A number of cultivars with larger fruit have been selected. In general, the paler or darker the color is, the sweeter the fruit.



Eugenia luschnathiana

Pitomba

- First introduced into the U. S. in 1914.
- A shrub or small tree to 20'.
- Hardy to 28 degrees F. or less
- Propagation is mainly by seed.



Eugenia luschnathiana

Pitomba

- Flowers occur in late spring and fruit ripens in mid Summer.
- Very little development has occurred on this fruit since its introduction.



Eugenia luschnathiana

Pitomba

- Pitomba have fruited in Southern California, however there is significant variation in seedlings.



Eugenia reinwardtiana (*E. carissoides*)
Cedar Bay Cherry

- A shrub or small tree to 10'-20'.
- Hardy to at least 26 F. Native to Eastern Australia.



Eugenia reinwardtiana (*E. carissoides*)

Cedar Bay Cherry

- Small white flowers may occur more than one time each summer.
- Fruit ripens approximately 30 days after flowering.



Eugenia reinwardtiana (*E. carissoides*)

Cedar Bay Cherry

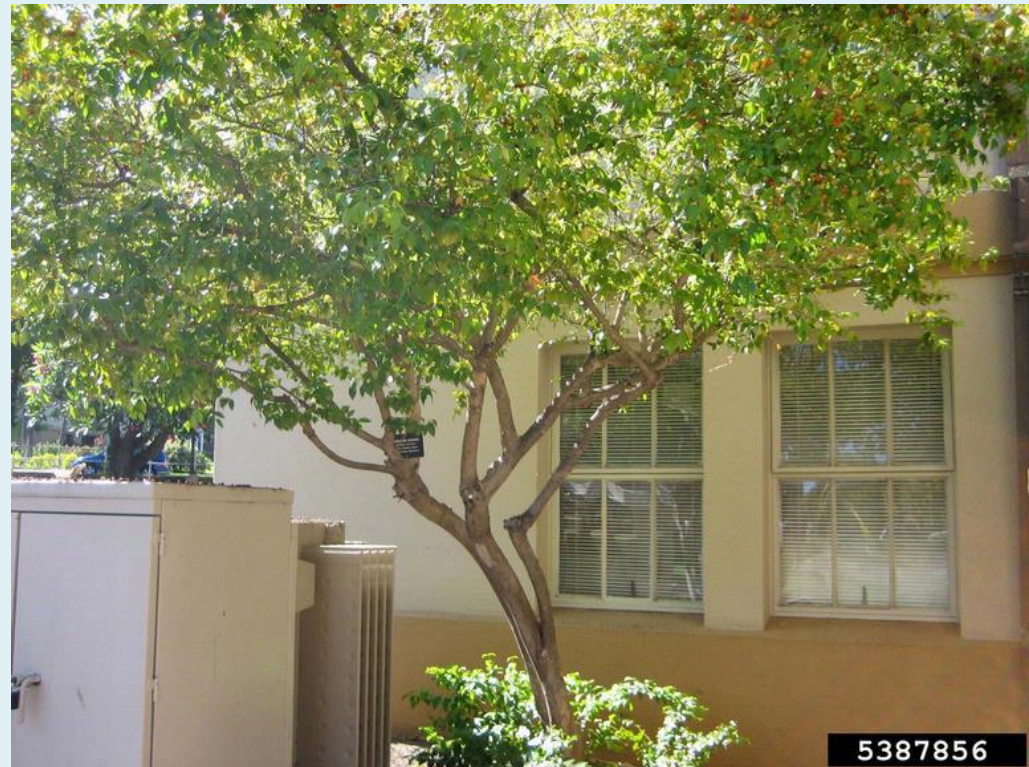
- The fruit is juicy & pleasant with a berry or grape-like flavor.
- Relatively new to California, the plants are currently propagated by seed.



Eugenia uniflora

Pitanga / Surinam Cherry

- Evergreen shrub or small tree to 20 feet.
- Cold hardy to the low 20's.
- No significant pests or diseases.



Eugenia uniflora

Pitanga / Surinam Cherry

- Tolerant of heavy pruning. Can be used as a screen, hedge, or espalier.
- Propagation is generally by seed, but improved varieties are propagated by grafting or by air-layers.



Eugenia uniflora

Pitanga / Surinam Cherry

- Similar to many *Eugenia* sp. the new foliage is red in color and fades into a dark green as the foliage matures.



Eugenia uniflora

Pitanga / Surinam Cherry

- Small flowers are produced several times per year. Often flowers and fruit occur at the same time.



Eugenia uniflora

Pitanga / Surinam Cherry

- Fruit are highly ornamental, translucent and very shiny with deep lobes that make the fruit resemble miniature Japanese lanterns.
- Immature fruit are green in color and as the fruit matures the fruit progress through many shades of orange to red.
- Fruit of many colors are on the plant during the fruiting season.



Eugenia uniflora

Pitanga / Surinam Cherry

- Fruit may be orange-red or dark purple-black in color when ripe. The fruit are very fragile and are easily damaged when ripe.
- Fruit sweet-tart and juicy but can sometimes have a flavor that some people describe as a “turpentine” taste.



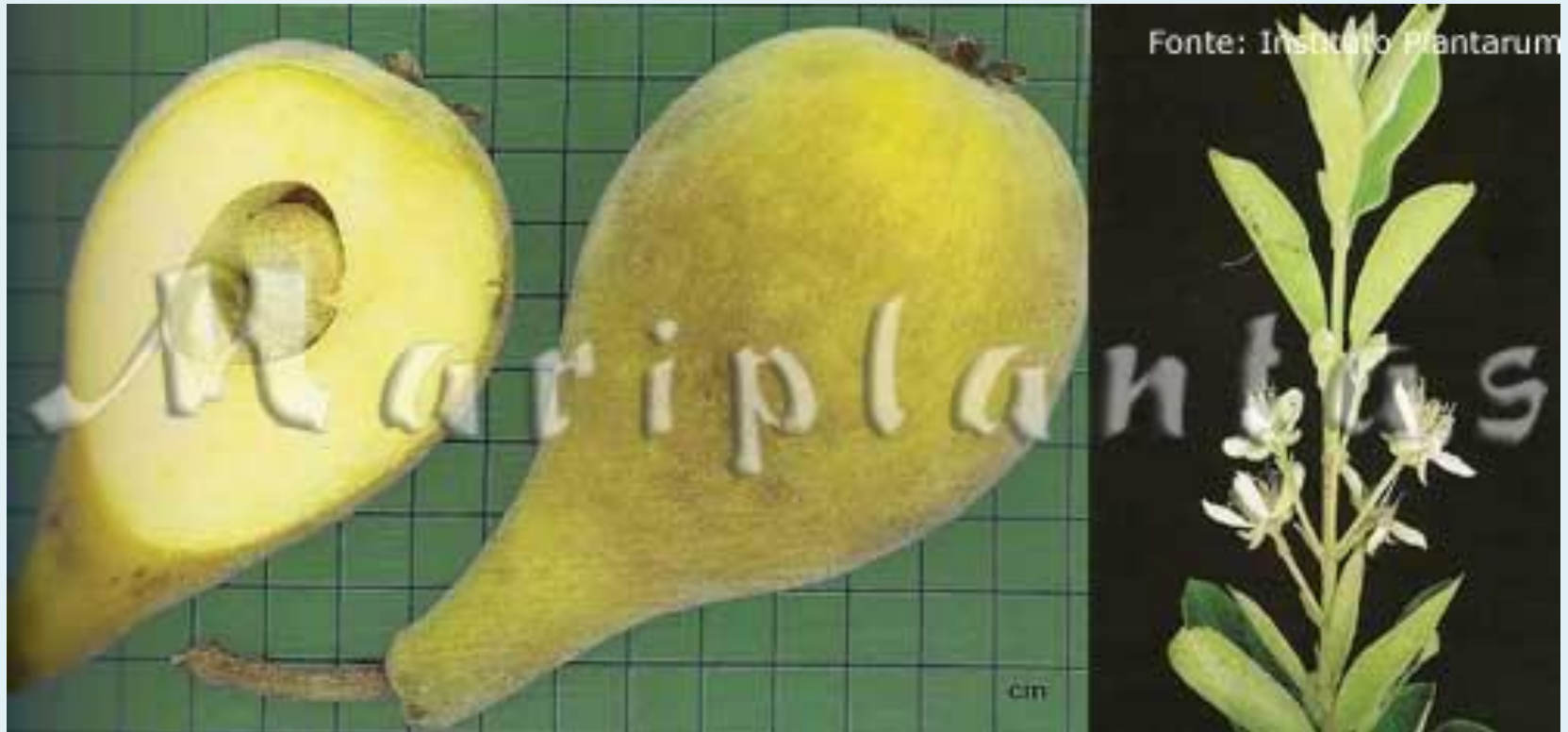
Promising *Eugenia* for those who like to experiment:

- The following *Eugenia* species are some with which I have no personal experience, but which I feel have fruit qualities worthy of merit and should be attempted here in California.
- This list is by no means all inclusive as there are many other species of *Eugenia* listed in literature, many of which have fruit commonly eaten by indigenous peoples and may be worthy of growing for fruit.

Eugenia klotzschiana

Pera do Campo

- This is a small shrub or tree from Central Brazil
- It is slender in habit and grows not more than 4 or 5 feet high. The leaves are lanceolate, 3 to 5 inches long, hard and brittle in texture and silvery pubescent on the lower surface.



Eugenia klotzschiana

Pera do Campo

- The pear-shaped, downy, golden-yellow fruit, 2 to 4 inches in length, ripen in Brazil from November to January.
- They have soft, juicy, acid flesh, and are highly aromatic in odor and flavor.
- The seeds, one to four in number, are irregularly oval in form and small in size.



Eugenia nitida

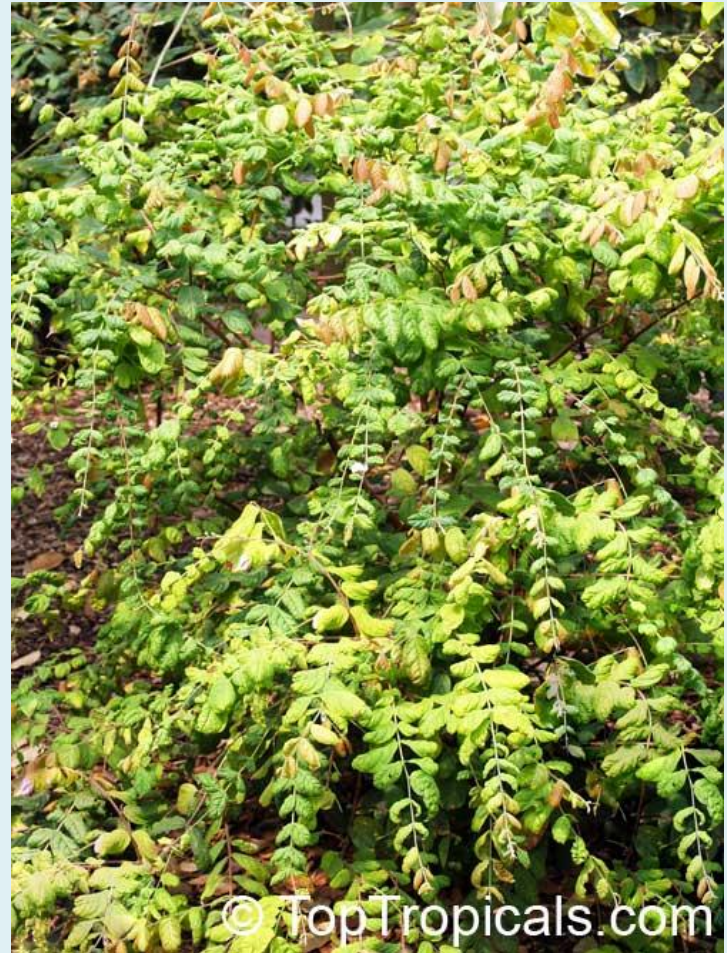
Pitango

- Growth habit, cultural requirements and fruit are said to be similar to *Eugenia uniflora*.
- Fruit are reported to be larger and to have a better flavor than *Eugenia uniflora*.



Eugenia stipitata
Araca-Boi / Araza

- Growth to 8'- 10'.



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Eugenia stipitata
Araca-Boi / Araza



Eugenia stipitata

Araca-Boi / Araza

- The skin of the fruit is thin, shiny & velvety.
- Soft & excellent, very fruity aroma & sour. The fruit has twice the amount of vitamin C as the average orange.



Eugenia stipitata

Araca-Boi / Araza

- The fruit is commonly used to flavor ice creams, sweets & beverages.



Eugenia tomentosa

Yellow Jaboticaba

- Small bush 8'- 10' with weeping habit.
- New growth is downy with pinkish color.
- Plants have been growing successfully in Lemon Grove, Chula Vista, and El Cajon but none have fruited yet.



Eugenia tomentosa

Yellow Jaboticaba



Eugenia tomentosa

Yellow Jaboticaba

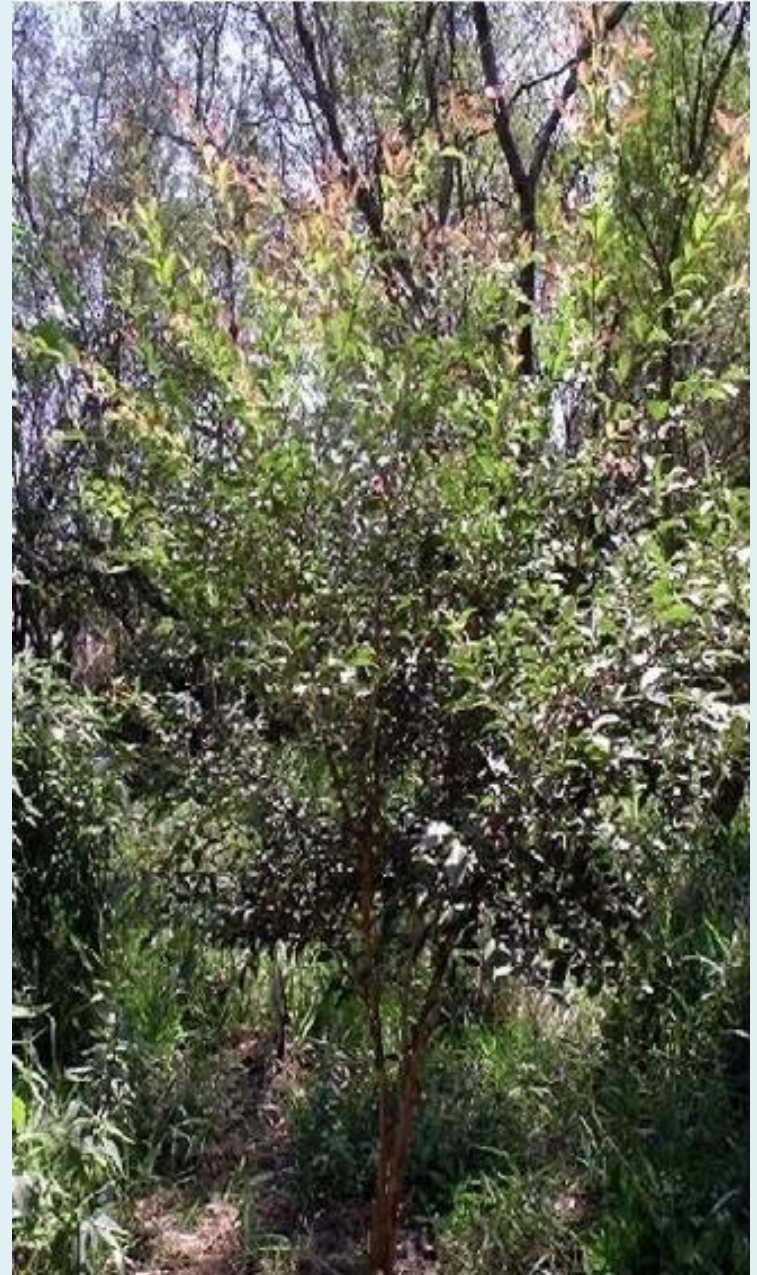
- 1" yellow fruit reportedly has an excellent sub-acid flavor.
- Fruit is said to be similar to Jaboticaba



Eugenia uvalha

Uvalha

- A shrub or small tree. Little known outside of Brazil.
- This slow-growing evergreen has aromatic leaves when crushed.



Eugenia uvalha

Uvalha

- 1" – 3' round yellow or orange fruit.
- Fruit are said to be soft, juicy and acid with an intense & agreeable aroma.



Eugenia uvalha
Uvalha



Eugenia victoriana

Guayabilla / Sundrop

- Small tree.
- Trees grow well in acid soil and prefer moisture and high organic matter content. Flowering and fruiting occurs in 3 to 4 years. Fruits ripen throughout the summer, from May through October.
- Beautiful shiny fruit makes excellent jams & jellies without additional pectin.



Eugenia victoriana

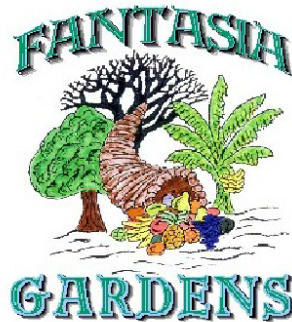
Guayabilla / Sundrop

- Sundrop is very sour, and is best used to make a delicious juice.
- The fruit can be deseeded and frozen, then blended with water and sweetener for juice which is very aromatic, bright orange, and reminiscent of passion fruit juice.





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Tom Del Hotal
(619) 454-2628

ISA Certified Arborist
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email: fantasiagardens@gmail.com

