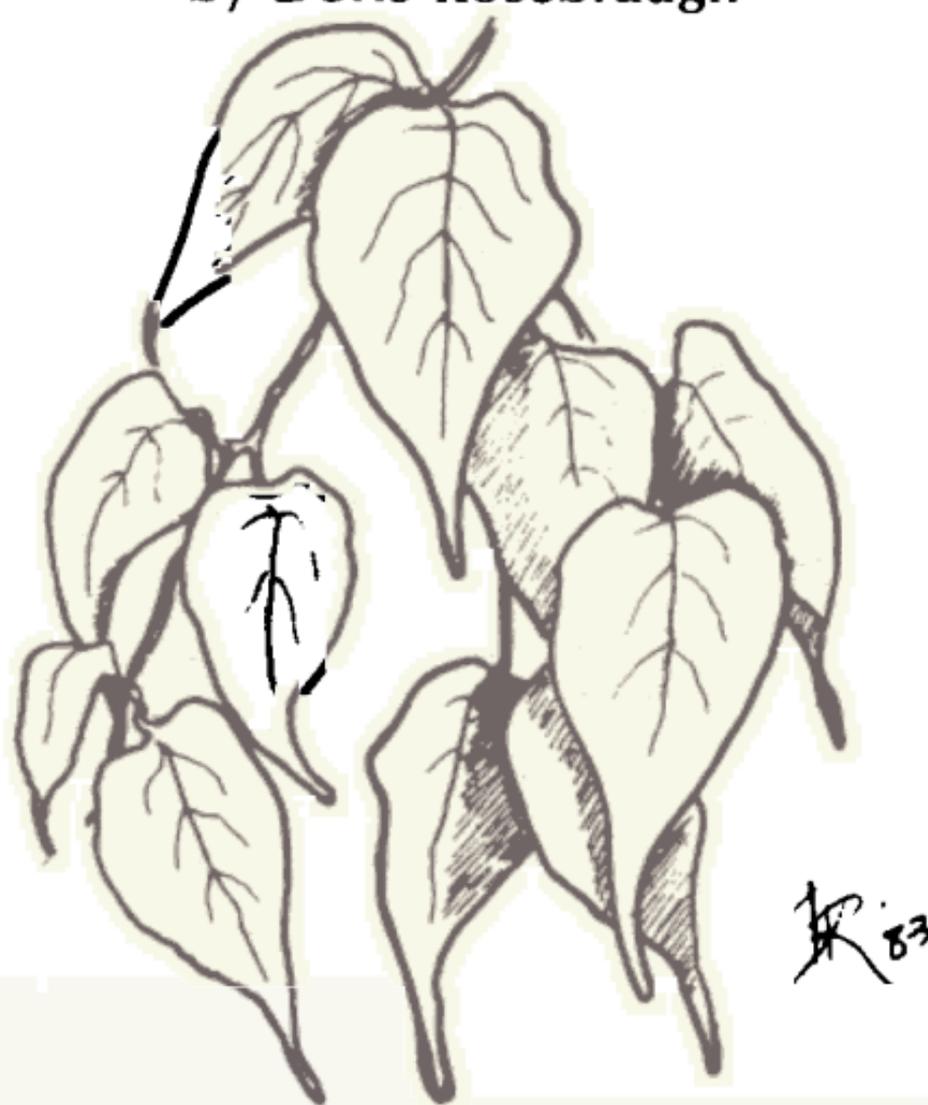


A BACKYARD NOTEBOOK

by Doris Rosebraugh



REDBERRY STOPPER (*Eugenia confusa*)

West and Arnold only commented on the rarity of the Redberry stopper. The **Complete Trees of North America** by Elias correctly states it is the most common of our native eugenias, but calls it a small tree to 59 feet. I prefer Gann's more realistic description of intermediate canopy or understory, taller than broad. A 40-foot specimen would be old under true hammock conditions.

My "twig" of 2 1/2 feet, given extra TLC, has zoomed in three years to eight feet. Holding the narrow form, the spread is no more than 4 1/2 feet. This makes it a nice filler in the native border.

The outstanding feature of this tree is its leaves. Simple, opposite, ever-green, uniformly wide to broadest near the base, they taper to long, slender drip points. Dark green in color, they appear to have been sprayed with an artificial coating. Growth habit sends delicate branches curving out and down so that they seem to layer. The glistening leaves, face up, intensify the effect of the light.

Nutritionally, it has a slight problem with iron tie-up in my marl soil but, with applications of chelated iron, renews its green. The fact that it still looks so great in less than ideal soil conditions shows what a survivor it is.

Design uses are numerous. With its narrow, rounded crown it makes an elegant entry specimen and several could be grouped together for real dazzle. As a relatively slow grower, it could be used as a container tree on a patio. This is truly an outstanding native with its carefully sculptured leaves, reddish trunk, and compact appearance. It is a neat tree in more ways than one.

RANGE: As it is listed as cold tolerant, I would try it along the protected coastal areas to Vero Beach.