



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

**WEED ALERT**

# Shoebuttton

**(*Ardisia elliptica*)**

**Shoebuttton** – the invasive non-native shoebuttton has escaped from cultivation and is spreading in the hammocks of southern Florida, and in some places has become quite weedy. Much of Tree Tops Park in Ft. Lauderdale is a virtual monoculture of large, very tall shoebuttton bushes. It flowers in the spring through the summer. Seeds are dispersed by birds.




The invasive, non-native shoebuttton (*Ardisia elliptica*) may easily be confused with the desirable native marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*). Both grow in the same habitats of southern Florida. Both grow to about 20 feet tall, have relatively large, leathery, simple leaves with smooth margins, and both produce hanging clusters of flowers and black fruits.


***Produces flowers and fruits year round. Seed dispersment aided by bird consumption of these fruits and the berries are edible.***


# Shoebuttton

## *Ardisia elliptica*

Non-native shoebuttton can be distinguished by 1) its mauve-tinged flowers; 2) its reddish new foliage; and 3) its flower and fruit clusters hang from leaf axils along the branches, rather than at the ends of the branches.

 **Leaves:** evergreen, alternate on stem; somewhat large, to 8 in. long, thick, waxy, (leathery), somewhat folded; oblong-obovate or elliptical-oblong, margins entire (smooth); new foliage at stem tips is reddish

 **Stems:** woody, smooth, gray

 **Flowers:** cymes (clusters) of mauve colored flowers, drooping on stalks, clusters arising from leaf axils (where leaf meets the stem); flowers star-shaped, 2 in wide, 5 petals


 **Fruit:** fleshy, shiny black to dark purple drupes, relatively large, one-seeded



Illustration courtesy of:  
Sandra Murphy-Pak, Center  
for Aquatic and Invasive Plants,  
University of Florida.

### LOOK FOR FIRST:

Tall shrub, small tree

New foliage at stem tips is reddish

Black berries hang in clusters, attached where leaves meet stems

**Distribution** - native to Asia, naturalized in Hawaii and the Caribbean islands.

