

ARDISIA ELLIPTICA THUNB.

Myrsinaceae/Myrsine Family

- Common Names:** Shoebutton ardisia
Synonymy: *Ardisia polycephala* Wall., *A. solanacea* Roxb., *A. humilis* Vahl.
Origin: India, China, Southeast Asia

Botanical Description: Evergreen, glabrous shrub or small tree to 5 m (17 ft) tall, with smooth stems and new foliage often reddish. Leaves alternate, to 20 cm (8 in) long, oblong to oval, fleshy, leathery, gland-dotted below, with margins entire. Flowers in axillary clusters, star shaped, 13 mm (0.5 in) wide, with mauve-colored petals. Fruit a rounded drupe, 6 mm (< 1 in) wide, red turning to black when ripe, with white juicy flesh.

NOTE: Differs from the native marlberry, *Ardisia escallonioides* Schlecht. & Cham., and native myrsine, *Rapanea punctata* (Lam.) Lundell (*Myrsine floridana* A. DC.), by its larger growth habit and conspicuous axillary clusters of mauve flowers.

Ecological Significance: Classified as a common weed in Hawaii (Holm *et al.* 1979). Naturalized in Jamaica, forming secondary thickets in moderately wet places (Adams 1972). Introduced to Florida for ornament by 1900 (Gordon and Thomas 1997). Noted as escaping cultivation in south Florida (Small 1933, Morton 1976, Austin 1978). In Miami-Dade County, now abundant in hammocks, old fields, disturbed wetlands, and tree islands in marshes, forming dense single-species stands in forest understories and crowding out native plants (R. Hammer, Miami-Dade County Natural Resources Department, 1996 personal communication). Also invading cypress and mangrove areas along the New River in Broward County (e.g., Secret Woods preserve). Has become a target of eradication by natural resource managers for Miami-Dade and Broward County Parks and Everglades National Park (M. McMahan, Biological and Environmental Consulting, 1996 personal communication).



Young flower clusters

SHOEBUTTON ARDISIA

Distribution: Common in East Indies, naturalized in Hawaii, the Caribbean, and Florida. Reported only for Dade County in 1965 (Lakela and Craighead 1965). Herbarium specimens now recorded for naturalized populations in Dade, Monroe, and St. Lucie counties (Wunderlin *et al.* 1995). Reported as sight records from a dozen parks in Dade, Palm Beach, and Broward counties (EPPC 1996).

Life History: Flowers and fruits all year (Long and Lakela 1971). Seed dispersal aided by bird consumption of fruits (R. Hammer, Miami-Dade County Parks, 1996 personal communication). Berries edible (Morton 1974).



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Fruits



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Young leaves



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Thicket in Everglades National Park