

Weed alert

Shoebuttton

(*Ardisia elliptica*)



Shoebuttton

The invasive nonnative shoebuttton has escaped from cultivation and is spreading in the hammocks and wetlands of southern Florida, forming dense patches that crowd out native plants. Much of Tree Tops Park in Ft. Lauderdale is a virtual monospecific stand of large, tall shoebuttton bushes. Flowers and fruits develop year-round. The black berries are edible and consumed by birds, which help disperse the seeds.

Shoebuttton may be easily confused with the desirable native marble-berry (*Ardisia escallonioides*). They grow in similar habitats and have similar large evergreen leaves, and both produce black fruits. However, the native species has white flower clusters, and they occur only at the stem tips (see other side).

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

Shoebuttton populations are altering and degrading native plant communities. There are numerous non-invasive plant alternatives available for plant cultivation in Florida.



Top: Shoebuttton berries

Center: Shoe buttton forrest

Left: Shoebuttton stem with berries



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Shoebuttan (*Ardisia elliptica*)

Shoebuttan can be distinguished by its 1) mauve-tinged flowers, 2) reddish-pink new foliage, and 3) flower and fruit clusters hanging 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 leaves at stem tips reddish-pink



Stems: woody, smooth, gray



Flowers:ymes (clusters) of mauve colored flowers, drooping on stalks, with clusters arising from leaf axils (where leaf meets the stem); flowers star-shaped, 2 inches wide, with five petals each



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



Illustration by Sandra Murphy-Pak, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida

Look at first:

- tall shrub, small tree
- new foliage at stem tips reddish-pink
- black berries hanging in clusters at leaf axils

Distribution

Native to Asia, naturalized in Hawaii and the Caribbean islands as well as in Florida.



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