

Java-plum

Eugenia cumini (L.) Druce

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Small to medium-sized evergreen tree commonly naturalized in windward and some leeward lowlands, recognized by the clusters of oblong blackish edible fruits on old twigs back of leaves. To 50 ft (15 m) in height and 2 ft (0.6 m) in trunk diameter, with rounded crown. Bark light gray, smoothish. Inner bark with thin green outer layer, mottled light brown, astringent and bitter. Twigs light green, becoming light gray, slightly flattened, hairless.

Leaves paired (opposite), hairless, with slender light yellow stalks. Blades narrowly elliptical, 2³/₄–5 inches (7–13 cm) long and 1¹/₂–3 inches (5–7.5 cm) wide, abruptly short-pointed at apex, short-pointed at base, slightly thickened and leathery, dull light green, paler beneath, with light yellow midvein, many straight fine parallel side veins, with many tiny gland-dots visible under a lens.

Flower clusters (cymes) on old twigs back of leaves, 2–2¹/₂ inches (5–6 cm) long and wide, with many paired stout branches at nearly right angles, end flower opening first. Flowers nearly stalkless, with cuplike conical light green base (hypanthium) about 1/8 inch (3 mm) long and broad, with four tiny rounded calyx lobes on rim. Petals four, white, rounded concave, more than 1/16 inch (2 mm) long. Stamens many, white threadlike, 3/16 inch (5 mm) long. Pistil with inferior ovary, many minute ovules, and stout style.

Fruits (berries) many, crowded and almost stalkless along twigs back of leaves, oblong to elliptical, 5/8–1 inch (1.5–2.5 cm) long, dark purple to black, juicy, sour, edible, 1-seeded.

The wood is white to yellowish white, moderately coarse-textured, with interlocked grain. It has been used on a small scale in Hawaii as decorative veneer for manufacture of marquetry designs on place mats.

Common to abundant, thoroughly naturalized in both moist and dry lowlands of Hawaii. Classed as a weed in waste places, pastures, and rangelands. Very common in gulches and flats along windward sides of all islands, reaching fairly large size in wetter areas such as near Kaneohe, Oahu, and Hanalei, Kauai. In dry sites

it is confined to moist gulches. Recorded by Hillebrand (1888) as cultivated (before 1871).

Special areas

Waimea Arboretum, Foster

Champion

Height 91 ft (27.7 m), c.b.h. 9.9 ft (3.0 m), spread 54 ft (16.5 m). Ruddy Tong, Kapaa, Kauai (1968).

Range

Native of Indo-Malaysian region. Introduced in many tropical countries.

Other common names

jambolan, jambolan-plum, palama; mesegerak (Palau)

Botanical synonyms

Eugenia jambolana Lam., *Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels

This genus commemorates Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736), patron of botany and horticulture.



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Flowering twig, fruit (lower right), 1 X.