

Shoebutton *ardisia*

Ardisia elliptica Thunb.

Myrsine family (Myrsinaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Introduced evergreen shrub or small tree with elliptical leathery evergreen leaves and many small pinkish star-like flowers, ornamental and becoming naturalized in moist lowland areas. To 20 ft (6 m) high and 3 inches (7.5 m) in trunk diameter. Twigs slightly stout, light green, purplish tinged, hairless.

Leaves alternate, elliptical, 3-4½ inches (7.5–11 cm) long, 1-1½ inches (2.5–4 cm) wide, short-pointed at apex, broadest beyond middle, tapering toward long-pointed base, edges straight, slightly thickened and leathery with side veins not visible, hairless, dull light green on both surfaces, beneath with gland dots sometimes blackish. Leafstalk about ¼ inch (6 mm) long, purplish, flattened above.

Flower clusters (panicles) at base of upper leaves, 1½–3 inches (4–7.5 cm) long, branched. Flowers many on slender green stalks of about ½ inch (13 mm), from pointed pink bud ⅜ inch (1 cm) long, spreading star-like, composed of cuplike calyx with five rounded lobes, whitish with brown dots; corolla with five lobes from short tube spreading starlike about ½ inch (13 mm) wide, pink with brown dots; five stamens inserted near base of corolla opposite lobes, with large long-pointed brown anthers united; and pistil with round greenish ovary containing many ovules and with slender whitish style.

Fruits (drupes) many, rounded, becoming ⅔ inch (1 cm) in diameter, slightly flattened, turning from pink to black, with gland-dots, calyx and base of style remaining, with purplish juice. Seed single, round.

Heartwood is pale brown with large conspicuous darker colored rays showing prominently on all surfaces. Of moderate density and hardness, with a fine texture; not used.

Planted as an ornamental for the pretty flowers and glossy leaves but escaping and becoming naturalized as an weed in moist lowland areas, especially Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii.

Special area

Waimea Arboretum

Range

Native of southeastern Asia. Widely cultivated through the tropics and becoming naturalized. Introduced and naturalized locally in south Florida.

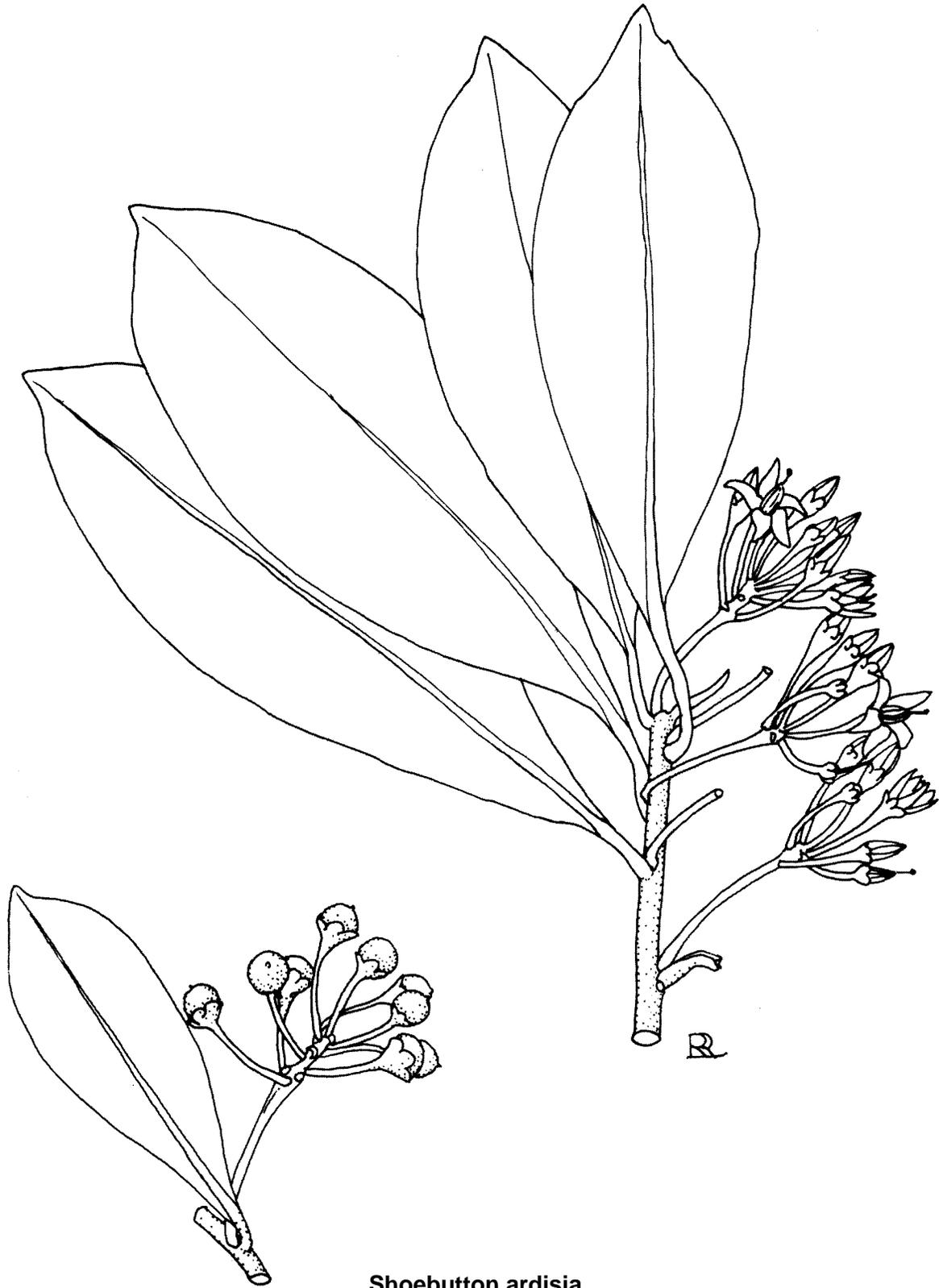
Other common name

elliptical-leaf ardisia

Botanical synonym

Ardisia solanacea Roxb., *A. humilis* auth., not Vahl.

The common name apparently refers to the resemblance of the round blackish fruits to buttons formerly worn on ladies' high-topped shoes.



Shoebuttan ardisia

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Flowering twig (above), fruiting twig (below), 1 X.