

Tropical Cherries

Info Sheet

Barbados Cherry, Cherry of the Rio Grande, Grumichama, Pitomba and Surinam Cherry

Barbados Cherry (Acerola)

Malpighia puniceifolia (glabra)

The Barbados Cherry, a native of the Lesser Antilles from St. Croix to Trinidad and from the family Malpighiaceae, is a densely branched evergreen shrub that grows moderately to about 12-feet high and 10 wide. It prefers rich, well-drained soil and benefits from Citrus



Nutritional Spray and good watering when fruiting. It is not tolerant of freezing weather, but usually resprouts when cold damaged. It has fair salt tolerance. The fruit is about one-inch in diameter, thin-skinned and bright red when ripe, and ready for harvest from about April through November. Production starts the second year after planting. It is delicious eaten fresh or frozen. One of the richest sources of vitamin C, one or two small fruit supplies the daily adult requirement of this vitamin. Nematodes can reduce its vigor if not planted in rich soil

Cherry of the Rio Grande

Eugenia aggregata



Native to Brazil, this small evergreen tree likes full sun and rich, moist soil. It grows slowly to about 15 feet with a width of 5 to 7 feet. It has an upright compact growth habit and attractive foliage and bark. It is the one of the most cold tolerant of the Eugenia

species (Surinam cherry, pitomba, etc). and can survive short periods of 20° F. It is fairly salt tolerant. Flowers are white and appear from March to May; fruits ripen from red to purple or black from May to June. The fruit is sweet and very juicy and somewhat similar to sweet cherries in flavor. The fruit is about one inch long, has a thin, tender, dark red skin and there is usually only one small seed per fruit. Fruiting starts in about 2 to 5 years. It takes about 10 years to bear from seed. Excellent eaten fresh or in jellies..

Grumichama Cherry

Eugenia braziliensis/E. dombeyi

Another Brazil native, grumichama grows moderately into a large and compact evergreen shrub or small tree, about 15 feet high and about 10 feet wide. Grumichama can also be hedged. It



prefers full sun to part shade and acidic soil, so fertilize every two months with **Holly-Tone**. **Citrus Nutritional Spray** should be used in the spring. Although this is the least hardy of the common Eugenias, mature trees have tolerated 26°F without injury. During the early spring, showy white one-inch flowers are produced in large

masses from March through April. Fruits follow quickly about four weeks after flowering. The fruit is ½" to ¾" wide and contains fairly large seeds. It is purplish-black in color, has a white, melting flesh, and usually grows in small clusters. The flesh is soft, almost melting, and sweet with good flavor, reminiscent to some of northern cherries. It is delicious when eaten fresh; it can also be stewed and makes great jelly and preserves. Grumichama is in the same genus as the Surinam cherry and has a slight hint of the Surinam cherry's resinous flavor. Its attractive appearance also makes the grumichama a great addition to your landscape because of its large glossy, evergreen leaves that are reddish when young.

Pitomba Cherry

Eugenia luschnathiana

Native to Brazil, this easy-to-grow small, compact but spreading evergreen tree grows moderately to 15 feet by 10 feet. More often, it grows into a large bush similar to cattley guava. Pitomba responds well to fertilizer, minor elements and good soil moisture. Spring growth flushes should be

sprayed with **Citrus Nutritional Spray**. If well-fed, pitomba has good salt tolerance. It freezes at about 27° F. The white flowers are showy and up to one inch across in spring. Pitomba produces a showy, bright yellow to orange-yellow thin-skinned cherry.



The tasty fruit ripens from May through July and is sweet to sub-acid in flavor; sometimes there is also a light fall crop. The Pitomba is also very aromatic and delicious as a fresh fruit. It can fruit when less than 3½-feet tall. The fruit is about one inch long and the thin skin is bright orange-yellow. The soft juicy flesh is aromatic and sweet to subacid in flavor.

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