

# *Myrsine guianensis* Rapanca, Myrsine<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

This evergreen shrub is grown primarily for its smooth green foliage. Myrsine is a dense, vertically growing shrub that can reach a height of 15 to 20 feet. Older plants become spreading and woody with numerous trunks. The attractive leaves of this plant are oval and a medium to dark green color. Young, vigorous plants in the nursery have well-spaced leaves along the green twigs, but those on older shrubs tend to cluster toward the ends of the stem. Small, inconspicuous greenish-yellow flowers occur in clusters that are found along the branches. Flowers are succeeded by decorative, shiny, black berries; plants of both sexes must be grown close by to obtain fruiting.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Myrsine guianensis*

**Pronunciation:** mer-SIGH-nee gee-uh-NEN-sis

**Common name(s):** rapanea, myrsine

**Family:** *Myrsinaceae*

**Plant type:** tree

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 1)

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** reclamation plant; trained as a standard; hedge; near a deck or patio; specimen; screen; border; attracts butterflies; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet)

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 15 to 20 feet

**Spread:** 8 to 12 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** symmetrical habit with a regular (or smooth) outline and individuals having more or less identical forms

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** revolute

**Leaf shape:** obovate

**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

1. This document is FPS420, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date September 1999. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** greenish-yellow

**Flower characteristic:** year-round flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** black

**Fruit characteristic:** attracts birds

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; no thorns; not particularly showy

**Current year stem/twig color:** brown

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Myrsine can be used in the landscape as an accent plant in a shaded or partially sunny landscape. It is excellent when used in shrub groupings. It is a good background plant in a shrub border, forming a fairly dense screen. Plant about 6 to 8 feet apart for a quick-forming screen. It is also useful as an understory plant and lends itself well to dune conditions.

*Myrsine guianensis* will adapt to variable soil conditions including poor drainage. This makes it especially useful near foundations or water retention basins, since water

often sits here after a rainfall. Regular clipping will be required if it is used as a foundation planting because of the plant's tendency to grow 20 feet tall. This shrub grows best in a partial to full shade location in the landscape, and it has a good salt spray tolerance. Native habitat includes the lee side of coastal upland plant communities where soil is sandy with shell fragments. Soil pH is neutral to slightly alkaline and may be poorly drained. It can also be found in baldcypress swamps among other wet-site-tolerant plants.

This plant is commonly propagated by seed. Young plants may also be transplanted from a field nursery with relative ease.

## Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.