

***Chiococca alba* Snowberry¹**

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Chiococca alba is a handsome, low scrambling shrub that can reach a height of 10 feet if given a support to climb upon (Fig. 1). The leathery leaves of the Snowberry are evergreen, shiny, and dark green in color. White to yellowish, tubular flowers are found in the leaf axil and occur in 3-inch-long racemes or panicles. Each raceme or panicle is tipped with 6 to 8 of the flowers, and these flowers turn from white to yellow with time. The common name used for this shrub refers to the large, ovoid, sparkling white fruits that follow the delightful flowers. This plant may be used as a mounding specimen and is a splendid trellis or espalier subject.

General Information

Scientific name: *Chiococca alba*

Pronunciation: kye-oh-KOE-kuh AL-buh

Common name(s): Snowberry

Family: *Rubiaceae*

Plant type: vine

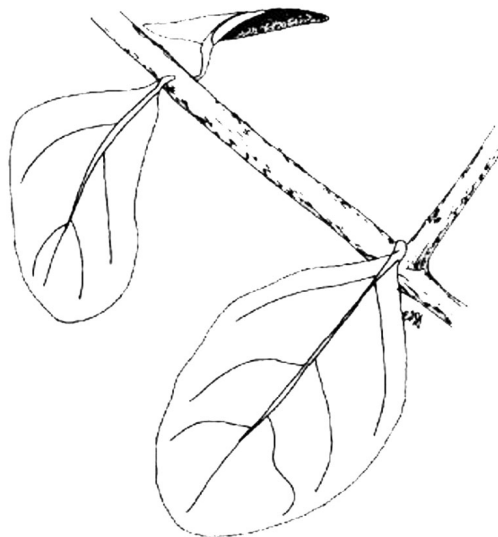


Figure 1. Snowberry.

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: espalier; mass planting; foundation

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Plant habit: spreading; round

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: white

Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam;

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

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

The Snowberry is a shrub that needs a sunny location and well-drained soil. It will grow well on sandy loam soils and can tolerate dry conditions. This plant can be found in or near coastal areas throughout Florida and will usually survive without care.

Pests and Diseases

Chewing insects may occasionally be a problem for *Chiococca alba*, but none are lethal.