

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Moujean Tea (*Nashia inaguensis*)

**Origin:** Inagua Island in the Bahamas

**Description:** It is a loose, spreading

up to 2 m high, with mature trunks of 5–10 cm diameter. The leaves are aromatic, simple, opposite (or

spatulate, 5–10 mm long, with

**Uses:** It is often used as a bonsai plant and the leaves can be used to

**Harvest:** It flowers in late summer and early fall.

**Flower:** Flowers are yellow and flowers axillary clusters (5-10 and

calyx; the corolla is whitish, about 2 mm long, four-lobed, and with four

**Tolerance:** It prefers full sun, warmth (a minimum temperature of 5 °C) and

Even a brief spell of dryness can kill



**General Description:** *Nashia inaguensis* is an evergreen shrub, commonly referred to as Moujean Tea, Bahamas Berry, or Pineapple Verbena. Moujean tea is seldom found growing in wild, even in its native places. It is mainly a cultivated species. This shrub can thrive well in several different types of soil, but it necessarily requires a soil that is rich in organic substances and is also well drained. However, the herb is very sensitive and cannot tolerate drying out. While many species generally return from the edge of withering when they are watered properly, moujean does not. When this plant started wilting, it does not bounce back to life even after watering following a dry spell. The fragrant foliage and tiny white flowers are highly attractive to pollinators, in particular the Atala butterfly. Apart from the flowers having a strong jasmine fragrance, when crushed or bruised, the leaves too emit a spicy fragrance similar to that of vanilla, honey or citrus.

- **Native Origin:** It is native to the east Caribbean islands, in particular the island of Inagua in the Bahamas, after which the species is named.
- **General History:** Dr. Popenoe, a former director of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Coral Gables, FL was the first to recognize *Nashia inaguensis* as a potential bonsai tree subject. Mary Miller then began propagating and selling *Nashia inaguensis* as bonsai trees. She even gave it its common name, *Moujean Tea*. The name *Moujean Tea* (the name used in the Bahamas) was confused with Fukien Tea (they're not related). Mary came up with 'Bahama Berry' and began selling it under that name and it continues in common use today.
- **Distribution:** *Nashia inaguensis* is widespread in marshy dry woods on the Great Inagua Island in the Bahamas archipelago. However, they are seldom seen in St. Croix and Puerto Rico. They can also grow well in Florida. In its native environment, the plant crawls along sunny, rocky outcroppings, semi-protected from steady high winds.
- **Season:** It can be propagated from cuttings, preferably in the spring and early summer during warm nights. It is a perennial plant.
- **Uses:** It is often used as a bonsai plant due to its miniaturized features. A decoction of the fragrant leaves, variously described as having the scent and flavor of citrus, vanilla, or pineapple, is used as an herbal tea. You can steep the leaves.

Moujean Tea	
Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Asterids
Order:	Lamiales
Family:	Verbenaceae
Genus:	<i>Nashia</i>
Species:	<b><i>N. inaguensis</i></b>

#### **Sources**

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nashia\\_inaguensis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nashia_inaguensis)
- [http://www.herbs2000.com/herbs/herbs\\_moujean\\_tea.htm](http://www.herbs2000.com/herbs/herbs_moujean_tea.htm)
- <http://www.bonsaimary.com/bahama-berry.html>