

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Muntingia (*Muntingia calabura*)

Quick Facts

Origin: South and Central America; the Caribbean.

Description: Muntingia is a small, fast-growing tree that can reach 40 ft. tall at full maturity. The evergreen leaves are dark green on top, light green underneath, and have an alternate phyllotaxy.

Uses: Food and medicine. Fruit are edible raw or made into jams. Flowers can be made into a medicinal tea.

Harvest: Summer months in Florida.

Flower: Summer months in Florida. Small white flowers with yellow stamens.

Tolerance: Moderate drought and cold tolerance. Low salt tolerance. Requires well-draining soil but will tolerate a wide range of soils.



General Description: Muntingia, or *Jamaica Cherry*, is a small, fast-growing tree that can reach up to 40 ft. tall at full maturity. The soft leaves are evergreen and have an alternate phyllotaxy. Leaves are dark green on top and light green underneath. The small, white flowers feature yellow stamens in the center. The small, round fruits are abundant, and depending on the variety, have a red or yellow color.

- **Native Origin:** South and Central America, and the Caribbean.
- **General History:** Muntingia, also known as *Jamaica Cherry*, is widely grown in the tropics and subtropics worldwide. By the early 1900s, Muntingia was popular in Southeast Asia, and in 1922, the USDA introduced several trees to Hawaii, USA. In 1926, Dr. David Fairchild collected seeds from a yellow-fruit variety in Ceylon, and by the 1930s, Muntingia could be found in home gardens throughout south Florida. Today, Muntingia is very popular throughout Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines, but is not very widespread in south Florida.

- **Distribution:** Tropics and subtropics worldwide.
- **Season of Harvest:** Summer months in Florida.
- **Culinary Uses:** Fruits are edible raw or made into jam. The flowers have antiseptic and antispasmodic qualities, and are made into medicinal teas.

Muntingia Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Malvales
Family:	Muntingiaceae
Genus:	<i>Muntingia</i>
Species:	<i>M. calabura</i>

Sources

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muntingia>

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