



Jaboticaba Care Sheet



Fruiting Bonsai—Bill in Savannah, Georgia. May, 2010



Brought to you by
S & S Bonsai of Colorado Springs, Colorado
(Most of the included information is obtained from several
online sources.)



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*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if
you were to live forever."*
—Mahatma Gandhi—

The Jaboticaba

(Myrciaria cauliflora Berg. , sometimes known as Eugenia cauliflora)

General Information: Origin: All four of the jaboticaba species are native to the Minas Gerais region of Brazil. Some are also indigenous to other parts of Brazil, as well as areas in Bolivia, Paraguay, northeastern Argentina, Uruguay and Peru. In Brazil jaboticabas are cultivated from the southern city of Rio Grande to Bahia, and from the seacoast to Goyaz and Matto Grosso in the west. It was introduced into California (at Santa Barbara) about 1904.

Distant affinity: Eugenias (*Eugenia* spp.), Feijoa (*Feijoa sellowiana*), Guavas (*Psidium* spp.).

Growth Habit: The jaboticaba is a slow growing large shrub or small, bushy tree. It reaches a height of 10 - 15 feet in California and 12 - 45 feet in Brazil, depending on the species. The trees are profusely branched, beginning close to the ground and slanting upward and outward so that the dense, rounded crown may attain an ultimate spread as wide as it is tall. The thin, beige to reddish bark flakes off much like that of the guava.

Foliage: The evergreen, opposite leaves are lanceolate to elliptic, 1 - 4 inches in length and 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide. In color they are a glossy dark green with a leathery texture. The size, shape and texture varies somewhat from one species to another.

Flowers: The small yellow-white flowers dramatically emerge from the multiple trunks, limbs and large branches in groups of four. It has been reported from Brazil that solitary jaboticaba trees bear poorly compared with those planted in groups, which indicates that cross-pollination enhances productivity.

Fruits: Jaboticaba fruit is grape-like in appearance and texture but with a thicker, tougher skin. Most California fruit is dark purple to almost black in color. Average size is one inch in diameter but can run from 3/4 to 1-1/2 inches, depending on species and variety. The gelatinous whitish pulp contains from one to four small seeds and has a pleasant, subacid flavor markedly similar to certain muscadine grapes. The skin has a slight resinous, turpentine, flavor that is not objectionable. Fruit may be produced singly or in clusters from the ground up all over the trunk and main branches, and the plant may fruit up to five times per year. Fresh fruit is delicious eaten out-of-hand and can be made into jellies, jams and wine. The skin is high in tannin and should not be consumed in large quantities over a long period of time

It has been said that the Bonsai form of a Jaboticaba does not flower but in May of 2010 it was reported to have done so by a gentleman in Savannah, Georgia. I only have his first name; Bill. (See photo on reverse side). A slow growing tree, it may take 8-15 years before it bears fruit.

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Temperature: Mature jaboticaba trees will tolerate minimums of 27 to 29°F (-2 to 3°C) for 2 or 3 hours if they are in good condition. However, young trees and bonsais may be severely injured at those temperatures, therefore, It is important that Jaboticaba never be in an environment below 30 degrees. Requires good protection from frost by bringing them indoors. This tree does not care for dry soil or great variations in temperature.

Lighting: Jaboticaba prefers bright sunlight although it can tolerate low light levels. If you place it outdoors in the summer, full sun can be handled well if kept well watered. During the hottest summer days, you would need to provide some shade.

Watering: Water adequately and frequently. It will not tolerate salt. As the root system is somewhat shallow, be careful not to let the soil get too dry.

Fertilizing: Acid fertilizer is best but Jaboticaba likes lots of food and will be thankful for just about anything you give it. For young plants half ratio fertilizer at monthly intervals will speed the plant's very slow growth rate. pH 5.5-6.5.

Pruning / Training: Early care must be given to avoid heavy branches on the upper portion of the tree as it sets heavy wood very quickly, especially toward its top. If nursery stock is obtained with heavy upper branches, remove them and train the new growth which will appear. Wounds tend to heal quickly. Any wiring should be done loosely and early in the growing season.

Insects / Pests: About the only pests bothering it are aphids on the new tender pink leaves and an occasional red spider mite attack.

Propagation: Most seeds are polyembryonic, producing a plant that is true or close to the parent plant. The seeds germinate in about one month. A suggested potting mixture is 2 parts peat, 2 parts coarse sand and 1 part coarse perlite, wood shavings or compost. Selected strains can be reproduced by inarching (approach grafting) or air-layering. Budding is not easily accomplished because of the thinness of the bark and the hardness of the wood. Veneer or side grafts are fairly successful. The grafted plant will fruit considerably earlier than a seedling. One may expect a grafted plant to produce fruit within three years, It can take from 8 to 15 years for a seedling to mature into a fruiting tree. It is this very slow growth that has kept this plant from becoming as popular as it deserves to be.

Repotting: Jaboticabas grow best in rich deep soil with a slightly acid pH (pH of 5.5 to 6.5). Although it is not well adapted to alkaline soils, it may be grown successfully by mulching and applying necessary nutrient sprays containing iron. The tree is not tolerant of salty or poorly draining soil.

Design and Styling: It is suitable for all styles.