

## *Cordia sebestena*

Orange Geiger Tree, Broadleaf Cordia, Geiger Tree, Largeleaf Geiger Tree

## Boraginaceae

Flower Display: C



Fort Myers, Florida

Mid October

*Cordia sebestena* is seen in much of south Florida's streetscapes and native plant gardens. It is native from the Bahamas to the tip of northern South America, and has been erroneously listed as a Florida native. *C. sebestena* is an evergreen tree that flowers throughout much of the year, but is at its best in June and July. The brilliant orange-scarlet flowers are borne on terminal geranium-like clusters. Flowers are light to dark orange with short yellow-orange stamens in the throat. In Florida, the accumulation of flowers on the tree is rarely spectacular. The display is somewhat better in the Caribbean. The coarse leaves are irritating to some people. This is a highly desirable tree for seaside planting. It grows in the limestone rocks of the Florida Keys and on beaches in the Caribbean. Its soil pH preference is 5.5 to 8.5. Its strong tolerance of alkaline soils makes it an excellent choice for a wide variety of situations. *C. sebestena* is subject to extensive, but non-fatal, damage by the Geiger beetle, which seems to have an affinity to this one species. The beetles can defoliate the tree, eliminate flowering, and make the tree temporarily unattractive. Cold weather can also cause the tree to lose leaves, and will give it an unkempt look. Streetscape trees are usually not long-lived when the soil is compacted and slow-draining. Propagate *C. sebestena* by seed, cuttings and air-layering. Seedlings take three years to reach blooming size. Young trees are easily transplanted. They have an upright, slightly pyramidal form and will need about 5 years to develop a dense canopy. Older trees have a dense round crown. To encourage a young tree to have a bushier appearance, pinch back the terminal ends in January. Fertilize *C. sebestena* once or twice a year. Don't let a fear of bugs or a fondness for soft leaves scare you away for this tree.



Key West, Florida

Mid June

### **Orange Geiger Tree**

**Syn:** *Sebesten sebestena*

**Origin:** Bahamas, Caribbean to Venezuela.

**Zone:** 10b-12b, 32°F minimum

**Growth Rate:** Medium

**Flowering Months:** Occasionally all year. Best in June and July

**Flowering Days:** Not known

**Leaf Persistence:** Evergreen but for the Geiger beetle

**Messiness:** Moderate

**Salt Tolerance:** High

**Drought Tolerance:** High

**Nutritional Requirements:** Low

**Potential Pests:** Scales, mites, rust, Geiger beetles

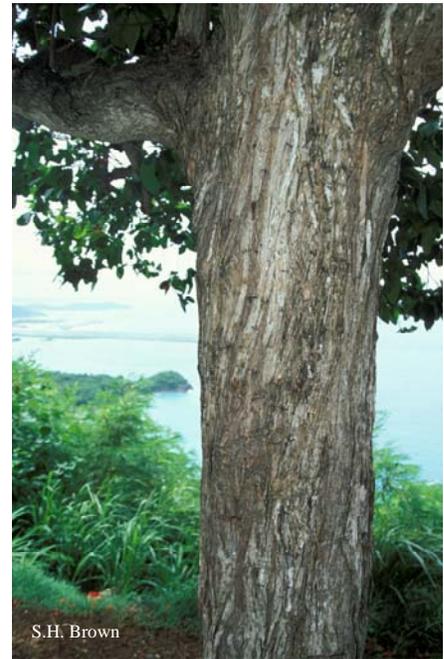
**Typical Dimensions:** 20'x20'

**Uses:** Garden, Park, Parking Lot, Patio, Seaside, Shade, Streetscape



Fortuna, St. Thomas, Eastern Caribbean

Late August



S.H. Brown

Fortuna, St. Thomas, Eastern Caribbean



S.H. Brown

Fort Myers, Florida

Early October



S.H. Brown

Fort Myers, Florida

Mid May

Damage caused by the feeding of orange Geiger beetles

**Leaves:** Simple, alternate, ovate, thick and rough on the upper surface, often toothed on edges, to 9 inches long and 4 1/2 inches wide

**Flowers:** Funnelform, light to dark orange, up to 1 1/2 inches long, with 5 to 7 crepey lobes, borne on terminal cymes

**Fruits:** Drupes, egg-shaped, up to 1 1/2 inches long, changes from green to white, in persistent calyces, sticky when ripe, 1 to 4 seeds. Edible but very bland.



S.H. Brown

Antigua, Eastern Caribbean

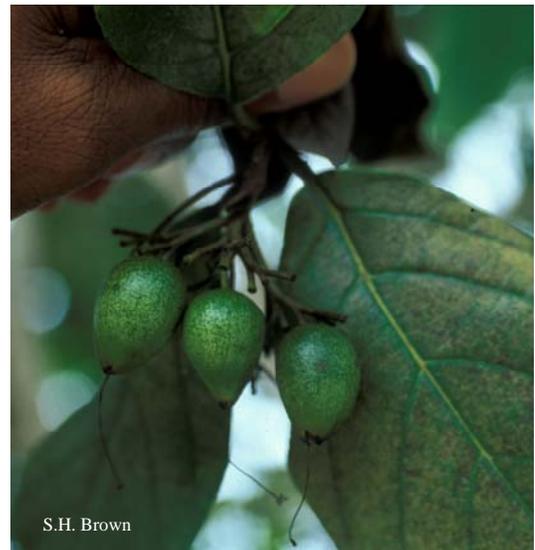
Mid November



S.H. Brown

Fortuna, St. Thomas, Eastern Caribbean

Late August



S.H. Brown

Fortuna, St. Thomas, Eastern Caribbean

Late August

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Tropical Flowering Trees List  
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