**Chiococca pinetorum** Pineland Snowberry

Edward F. Gilman

### Introduction

*Chiococca pinetorum* is a handsome, low scrambling shrub that can reach a height of 10 feet if given a support to climb upon (Fig. 1). It climbs into neighboring trees and shrubs in the wild. The leathery leaves of the Snowberry are evergreen, shiny, and dark green in color. They are smaller than *C. alba*. White or purple-white, 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.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** Chiococca pinetorum  
**Pronunciation:** kye-oh-KOE-kuh pye-net-TOR-um  
**Common name(s):** Pineland Snowberry  
**Family:** Rubiaceae  
**Plant type:** ground cover  

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round  
**Origin:** native to Florida  
**Uses:** espalier; mass planting; foundation; ground cover  
**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.
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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Description**

**Height:** 2 to 3 feet  
**Spread:** 3 to 6 feet  
**Plant habit:** spreading; round  
**Plant density:** open  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**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:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white; white-purple  
**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

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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

This plant may be used as a tall ground cover in a partially shaded or sunny location. Plants blend together making a loose mass of foliage several years after planting on 4- to 5-foot centers.

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

Chewing insects may occasionally be a problem for Chiococca alba