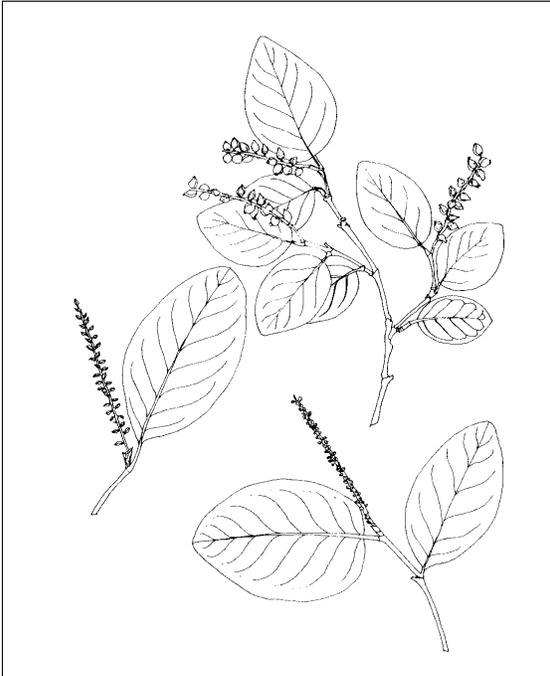


***Coccoloba krugii* Lindau**  
POLYGONACEAE

wild-grape

Synonyms: none



**General Description.**—Wild-grape, also known as white wood, crabwood, and bow-pigeon, is an evergreen shrub or small tree 1.5 to 6 m in height and stem diameters up to 10 cm. The plant is supported by an extensive lateral root system of black roots. Older plants usually have multiple stems arising from the root crown. The smooth or slightly fissured bark is gray. A dense, branchy crown is formed of trident or bifurcate branches and slender twigs. Leaves have a reddish petiole 5 to 6 mm-long, and reddish midvein. The blades are coriaceous, entire, ovate to suborbicular, and 2 to 6 cm long. This species is dioecious (male and female flowers on different trees). The flower clusters are terminal spikes. Flowers are tiny, greenish-white, five-merous, and nearly stalkless. The fruits are fleshy and black, ovoid and somewhat triangular in cross section, 4 to 5 mm long, and have a mildly sweet flavor somewhat like grapes. The fruit juice stains skin and clothing. Each fruit contains one dark brown akene (Howard 1988, Liogier 1985, Little and others 1974).

**Range.**—Wild-grape is native to the Bahamas,

Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, St. Martin, Anguilla, Barbuda, and Antigua. A natural hybrid, *Coccoloba krugii* x *uvifera*, with features intermediate between the two parents is found in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Anguilla, and Barbuda (Howard 1988, Liogier 1985, Little and others 1974).

**Ecology.**—Wild-grape grows on well-drained to excessively drained, mostly slightly acid to mildly alkaline soils in the whole range of soil textures. It is found in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands from near sea level to 125 m in elevation (Little and others 1974) in areas that receive from 750 to 950 mm of annual precipitation. Wild-grape is intolerant of shade. Because it grows slowly, in order to compete it must grow on difficult sites such as beach strands, dry coastal forests, shallow rocky headlands, hillsides, and ridges. The species is mostly found in remnant forests and sometimes highly disturbed galleries. Wild-grape may occur as individual plants, in groups, or in thickets.

**Reproduction.**—Wild-grape flowers in the fall and bears fruits during the winter (Little and others 1974). A collection of fruits from Puerto Rico averaged  $0.0985 \pm 0.0021$  g/fruit. Air-dried seeds separated from them weighed an average of  $0.0148 \pm 0.003$  g/seed or 68,000 seeds/kg. However, sowing them in commercial potting mix with no pretreatment resulted in only 5 percent germination. The seeds are dispersed by birds, iguanas, and possibly mammals. Seedlings are not common. Plants sprout when cut or burned.

**Growth and Management.**—Growth of wild-grape is slow, perhaps 10 to 20 cm of height per year. Plants are relatively long-lived and may renew themselves by coppicing and continue clonally through more than one generation of crowns. No management experience has been published. Planting any slow-growing species in wildlands is a challenge; protection of remnant forests is probably the best approach to promoting wild-grape.

**Benefits.**—Wild-grape wood is heavy and hard and useful for at least fuel. The fruits are edible and tasty, though small. The fruits are counted among the food sources of the endangered

Anegada iguana (*Cyclura pinguis*) (International Reptile Conservation Foundation 2002).

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