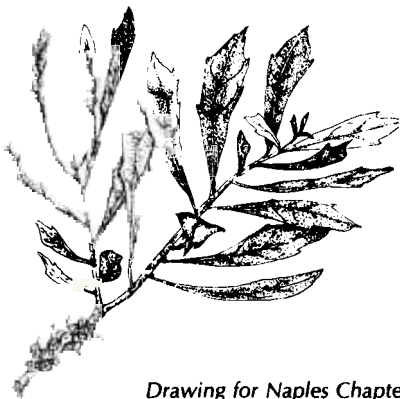


# A BACKYARD NOTEBOOK

## A Brief Summary of Personal Experimentation with Natives as Backyard Plants

(First in a Series)

by Doris Rosebraugh



*Drawing for Naples Chapter  
note cards (½ size)*

### **WAX MYRTLE (*Myrica cerifera*)**

West and Arnold list 40 ft. for height and one foot or more trunk caliper. I have yet to see one of this size, although in areas farther north this may be possible. In the wilds they are most often seen as rounded clumps sculptured by the winds. Gann lists it as a durable plant that will survive extremes of cold or heat. It is hardy from Maryland to Texas and certainly all over Florida. The habit of multi-branching makes it very desirable for small ornamental specimen trees in lieu of ligustrum or orange jasmine. It is recommended for parking lot environment, and where salt tolerance is necessary.

In my native border it has been a rapid grower but has been shaded out badly in some areas. The one against the fence with the eastern side exposed is now at least 12 feet high. This is unpruned growth. This plant requires full sun for best growth. In intermediate or understory, it would become straggly. Wax myrtle will also make a nice informal hedge or privacy screen and the females produce bird-attracting berries, from which bayberry candles are made.

(After my recent South Carolina vacation, I believe West and Arnold's description — the myrtles were at least 25 feet, multi-trunked, and lush.)