



Rare Plants of Louisiana

Lindera subcoriacea – bog spicebush

Laurel family (Lauraceae)

Rarity Ranks: S1/G2

Range: AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, VA

Recognition:

- 1) Large multi-branched deciduous shrub
- 2) Leaves somewhat glossy above, pale and hairy below; leathery, especially in full sun
- 3) Leaves 1.5-3.5” long, blunt-tipped with a wedge-shaped base
- 4) Young leaves have faint lemon scent; stems lemon-piney scented when bruised or cut
- 5) Flowers yellow and appear before leaves erupt; female and male flowers born on separate plants
- 6) Fruits become apparent shortly after fertilization and gradually enlarge, mature to bright red in Fall



Flowering Time: mid March; **Fruit** – Fall

Light Requirement: Partial shade to full sun

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL – almost always occurs in wetlands

Habitats: Shrub-dominated seepage areas that are constantly wet or moist, often with abundant peat moss (*Sphagnum* spp.). Soils are typically high in organic matter, sometimes “quaking” under foot. Fire is an important process in keeping sites open and bog spicebush will decline in excess shade. Fire also limits woody competition therefore maintaining groundwater hydrology (large trees can “suck up” a lot of water). Associates include sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), swamp blackgum (*Nyssa biflora*), baygall waxmyrtle (*Myrica heterophylla*), odorless bayberry (*M. inodora*), white titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*), gallberry (*Ilex coriacea*), poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), and pitcher plants (*Sarracenia alata*).

Threats:

- 1) Fire exclusion – this allows plants to be shaded out and larger woody plants to lower the water table by taking up more water
- 2) Drainage of habitat or other alteration of hydrology (direct modifications or indirect due to fire suppression)
- 3) Siltation of habitat from upslope activities

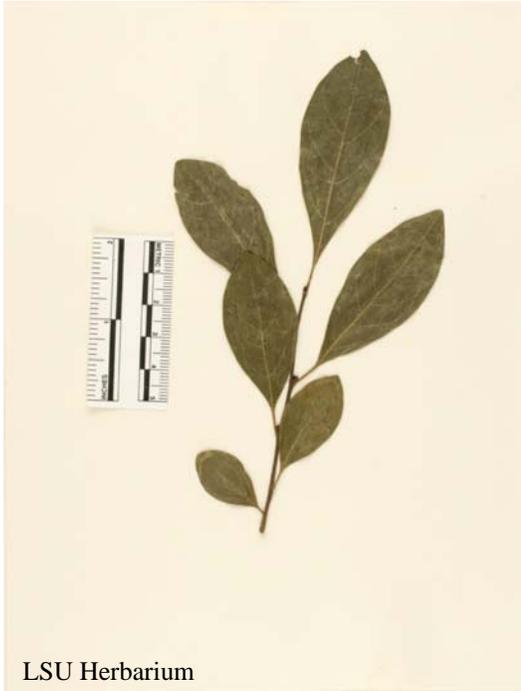
Beneficial management practices:

- 1) Follow Best Management Practices, being more liberal with Streamside Management Zone width where steep slopes occur above baygalls and bogs
- 2) Prescribed burning – allow fires to burn into baygalls and streamside forests and bogs adjacent to uplands, rather than placing fire lines at the interface of uplands and streamside habitats
- 3) Commercial thinning upslope and around bog spicebush habitat can increase light and remove large trees which “suck up” too much water. Bog spicebush habitat is usually mucky, so within these areas manual control of competing trees and large shrubs to include injecting, hand clearing, or dropping and leaving trees is more appropriate.





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LSU Herbarium



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Clockwise from upper left:

- 1) Specimen of bog spicebush showing leaf size and shape, ruler = 2". Note wedge-shaped leaf bases and blunt tips.
- 2) Bog spicebush in fruit, Stone County, Mississippi.
- 3) Female flowers of bog spicebush.
- 4) Male flowers of bog spicebush.

Flower close-up images provided by Mississippi Natural Heritage Program.

References:

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