

# Cephalanthus occidentalis



## common buttonbush

Family	Rubiaceae		
Origin	Native		
WIS Code	OBL	CoC	7

### DESCRIPTION

Brushy shrub (3 m tall), with many arching branches, and reddish brown shaggy bark becoming ridged and furrowed with age. Leaves (7 to 15 cm long) are opposite or in whorls of three or four, elliptic, pointed at the tip and supported by a red stalk (petiole) with a pair of dark brown triangular appendages (stipules) at the base of the petiole.

### FLOWERS AND FRUITS

June through September. The white tubular flowers are found in stalked globe-like heads toward the branch tips. Flower heads are 2 to 3.5 cm in diameter, and resulting fruits are dense balls of nutlets, easily split apart when dried.

### HABITAT

Swamps, marshes, bogs, depression ponds, and lake edges.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

*Cornus amomum*, silky dogwood, with similar leaf shape and venation, lacks the triangular stipules at the base of the petiole, has flattened, branched flower heads (not spherical), and green fruits turning dark blue. Like all dogwoods, *C. amomum* has leaf veins with distinctive elastic thread-like fibers, observed when the leaves are torn horizontally across the leaf veins and pulled slowly apart. See *C. amomum* page for image of this characteristic.



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