



Lindera benzoin

northern spicebush

Family Lauraceae

Origin Native

WIS Code FAC CoC 5

DESCRIPTION

A woody, multi-stemmed shrub (1 to 5 m tall) with new twigs frequently green, and stems and older branches brown with white lenticels (pores). Leaves are light to medium green, simple, thin, alternate (5 to 12.5 cm long; 2.5 to 6 cm wide), oval, tapering at both ends and smooth on the margins and upper surfaces (underside sometimes slightly hairy). The lemon-like spicy fragrance of bruised leaves gives this species its common name.



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FLOWERS AND FRUITS

March to May, August to September. Yellow flower clusters (four to six flowers per cluster and each flower to 7 mm wide) occur in the previous year's leaf axils (where leaf meets stem), and appear early in the spring before the leaves. Fruits are fleshy oval short-stalked drupes with a single seed, and fruits turn bright red at maturity in late summer and fall.



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HABITAT

Mesic to upland woodlands, floodplain forests, seepage swamps.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Nyssa sylvatica, blackgum, is a small to medium tree with similar simple, alternate, oval leaves and fruits that are drupes. Differences include the lack of lemony smell in *N. sylvatica*, fall leaf color (yellow for *L. benzoin* and red to purplish and spotted for *N. sylvatica*), and fruit color (blue-black for *N. sylvatica*, not red).



Nyssa sylvatica

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