

***Lindera benzoin* Spicebush¹**

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

A large shrub, reaching a 10 foot height and spread, spicebush is so named because of its pleasing aroma when bruised (Fig. 1). When planted in a sunny location, spicebush will turn a lovely yellow in the fall but when grown in the shade will not be as colorful or grow as densely. The flowers are insignificant and fruits form only on female plants.

General Information

Scientific name: *Lindera benzoin*

Pronunciation: lin-DEER-ruh ben-ZOE-in

Common name(s): spicebush

Family: *Lauraceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 4B through 9A (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

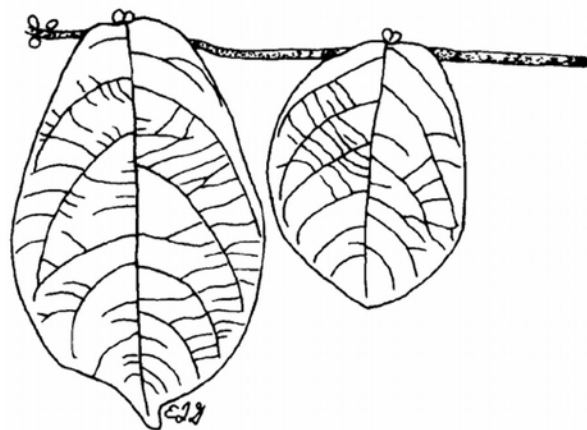


Figure 1. Spicebush

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: border; naturalizing; foundation; mass planting; attracts butterflies

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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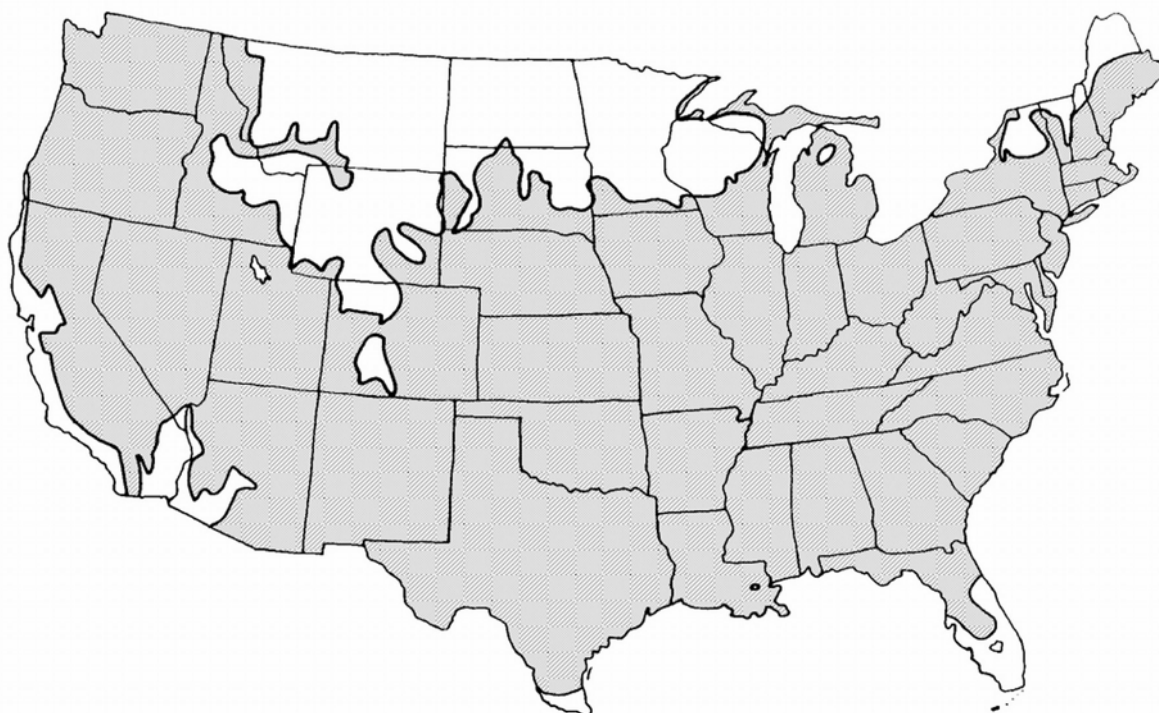


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet

Spread: 6 to 12 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: fragrant

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multitrunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

More of a naturalizing plant used in reclamation, spicebush could be brought into the residential or commercial landscape for its nice fall color. It is a large shrub best saved for large scale landscapes, or in the back of a shrub border to be featured in the fall foliage color season.

Although considered difficult to transplant from a field nursery, spicebush has few serious disease problems. There should be little problem establishing the plant from a container.

Pests and Diseases

Few problems warrant concern.