



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Calycanthus floridus*¹

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Introduction

Sweetshrub could be used more as an ornamental in moist locations (Fig. 1). The flowers are borne in midspring and have maroon to brown, strap-like petals and a fragrance similar to that of strawberries. They are borne somewhat inside of the outer layer of foliage so they are often obscured from view. They were used in years past to freshen the smell in the top several drawers of a set of dresser drawers. Occasionally, they are used in potpourris. The leaves and fruits are aromatic when crushed. Several trunks form from the base of the plant and sprouts often grow from roots forming many trunks.

General Information

Scientific name: *Calycanthus floridus*

Pronunciation: kal-lick-KANTH-us FLOR-rid-us

Common name(s): Sweetshrub, Strawberry-Bush, Carolina Allspice

Family: *Calycanthaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 10A (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: screen; espalier; specimen

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

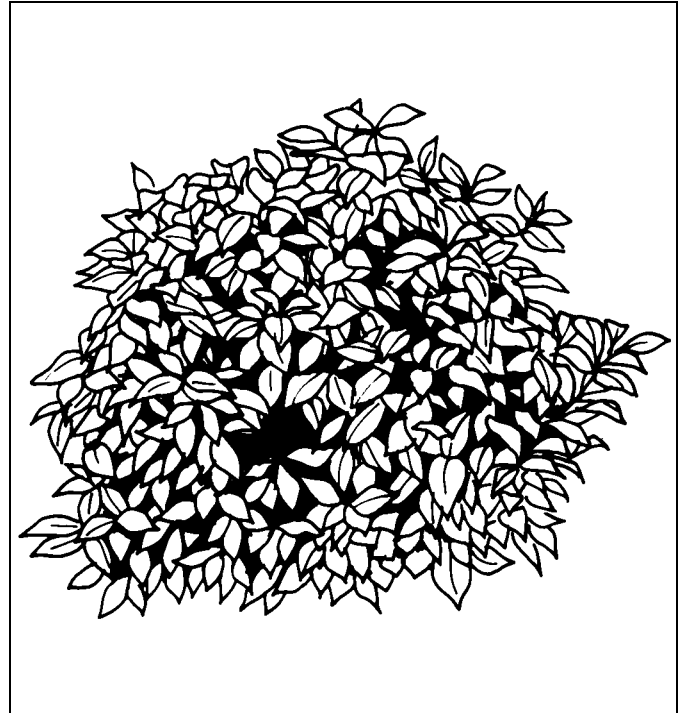


Figure 1. Sweetshrub.

Description

Height: 6 to 9 feet

Spread: 6 to 12 feet

Plant habit: round; oval

Plant density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-95, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** ovate
- 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:** red
- Flower characteristic:** pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** irregular
- Fruit length:** 3 to 6 inches
- Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** green

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk
- Current year stem/twig color:** reddish
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

Culture

- Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade
- Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; loam;
- Drought tolerance:** moderate
- Soil salt tolerances:** poor
- 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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The upright, oval shape and attractive foliage make Sweetshrub an excellent candidate for the back of a shrub border or for use as a screen. It can be sheared or thinned, depending on the desired use. Pruning and training the plant to several, upright stems can create an attractive specimen plant. A height of 9 feet and spread of 12 feet can be expected. The plant grows in sun or shade but is taller in shade. Sweetshrub transplants easily and prefers a moist soil. It is an endangered plant in Florida.

'Athens' suckers from the base, has white flowers and yellow fall color; 'Michael Lindsey' has wonderful fragrance and beautiful, shiny leaves.

Pests and Diseases

Bacterial crown gall causes warty-looking growths on the stems near the soil line. There is no practical control measure for this problem. Destroy infected plants and avoid planting in contaminated soil.

Powdery mildews of different genera cause a white coating on the leaves.

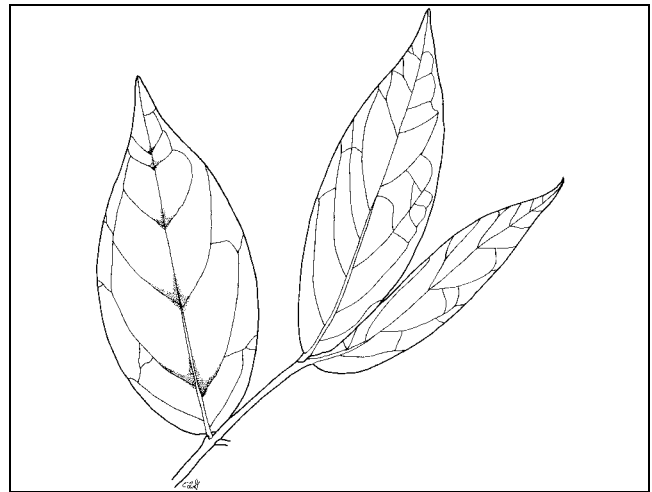


Figure 3. Foliage of Sweetshrub