**Calyptranthes pallens**

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**Introduction**

Spicewood is an upright shrub or small tree with a unique spicy fragrance that gives this plant its more popular common name (Fig. 1). This member of the Myrtle family has small light green, glossy leaves that have a pink to red tinge when young. The flowers open when a small lid flips up from the floral cup. These mostly inconspicuous, spring and summer blooms are white to beige in color and have a pleasant fragrance. The fruits change from green to orange, red, yellow, and then black. The tree and the fruits are appealing to many species of birds; the smaller birds use the tree as cover.

**General Information**

*Scientific name:* Calyptranthes pallens  
*Pronunciation:* kal-lip-TRANTH-eez PAL-lenz  
*Common name(s):* Spicewood, Pale Lidflower  
*Family:* Myrtaceae  
*Plant type:* tree  
*USDA hardiness zones:* 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)  
*Planting month for zone 10 and 11:* year round  
*Origin:* native to Florida  
*Uses:* trained as a standard; screen; border; espalier; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; superior hedge  
*Availability:* somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

**Description**

*Height:* 10 to 15 feet  
*Spread:* 6 to 10 feet  
*Plant habit:* oval  
*Plant density:* moderate  
*Growth rate:* moderate  
*Texture:* medium  

**Foliage**

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: red; yellow; black
Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked 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
Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; slightly 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

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

Spicewood may be used as a specimen, or can be clipped into a hedge or maintained as a foundation plant. It can be trained into a small, multi-trunk tree.

Spicewood prefers a full sun to light shade location in the landscape. It is adaptable to many soils and is moderately drought tolerant. However, this plant grows best in moist to wet areas.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.