

SPICEBUSH

A NATIVE, NON-INVASIVE SHRUB THAT SUPPORTS BOTH BEAUTY AND BIODIVERSITY.



KEY IDENTIFICATION FEATURES

- **Growth habit:** Rounded, multi-stemmed shrub with smooth, aromatic stems.
- **Leaves:** Simple, alternate, obovate, and fragrant when crushed; turn bright yellow in fall.
- **Flowers:** Small, yellow, fragrant blooms appear in early spring before leaves emerge.
- **Fruit:** Female plants produce bright red drupes in late summer or early fall.
- **Plant sex:** Dioecious; male and female flowers occur on separate plants.

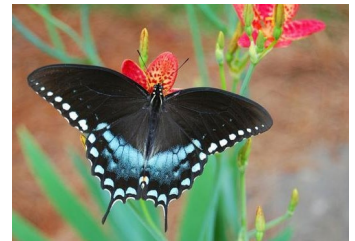
Common Name	Spicebush
Scientific Name	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>
Plant Type	Fragrant, deciduous North American shrub
Size	Typically, 6–15 feet tall and wide
Light	Shade, part shade, or sun
Moisture	Moist, occasionally wet
Best Uses	Woodland borders, shade gardens, rain gardens, naturalized areas
Other Names	Wild Allspice, Benjamin Bush

HABITAT & GROWING CONDITIONS

- Native across much of North America, from southern Canada to northern Mexico.
- Common in damp woods, stream banks, forest understories, and woodland edges.
- Thrives in rich, moderately moist soils but tolerates a range of soil conditions. Works well in shade gardens, woodland borders, rain gardens, and naturalized landscapes.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **Wildlife value:** Host plant for spicebush swallowtail butterfly caterpillars.
- **Pollinator support:** Early spring flowers provide one of the first nectar sources in woodland areas.
- **Bird food:** Red fruits are eaten by birds and other wildlife.
- **Ornamental appeal:** Fragrant flowers, bright yellow fall foliage, and red fruit add seasonal interest.



The spicebush swallowtail caterpillar resembles a tiny snake and thereby may gain some protection from predators.

Photo by J. R. Baker

PLANTING TIPS

- Plant both male and female shrubs if fruit production is desired.
- Choose moist, well-drained soil when possible.
- Water regularly until established; drought tolerance improves with age.
- Prune as needed to maintain size, shape, or a multi-trunk form.