


**sassafras** [Lauraceae](#) [Sassafras](#) *albidum* (Nutt.) Nees  symbol:

**vTree**

SAAL5

**Leaf:** Alternate, simple, ovate to elliptical, entire, 3 to 6 inches long, pinnately veined and variably lobed, green above and below and fragrant when crushed; leaves may be unlobed, 2-lobed (resemble a mitten), or 3-lobed (resemble a trident), and all three shapes may be present on the same branch.

**Flower:** Species is dioecious; small but quite showy, both male and females are bright yellow-green, borne in 2 inch racemes appearing in early to mid-spring.

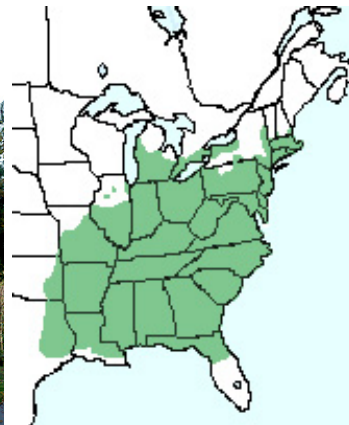
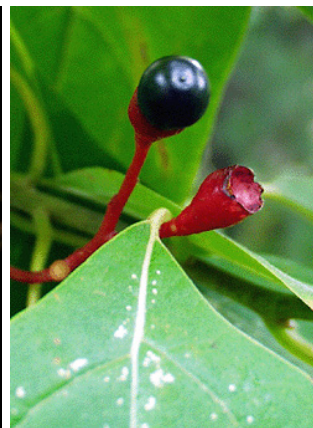
**Fruit:** Dark shiny blue, ovoid, fleshy drupes (1/3 inch long) that are borne in a red cup attached to a red stalks, held upright, maturing late summer.

**Twig:** Slender, green and sometimes pubescent, with a spicy-sweet aroma when broken; buds are 1/4 inch long and green; twigs from young plants displayed at a uniform 60 degree angle from main stem.

**Bark:** Brown, with cinnamon-brown inner bark, becoming coarsely ridged and furrowed; when cut the spicy aroma is obvious.

**Form:** Small to medium sized tree up to 60 feet tall with an irregular often twisted trunk and main branches, usually flat-topped crown; root suckering may result in thickets.

**Looks like:** [sourwood](#) - [blackgum](#) - [common persimmon](#)



**Additional Range Information:**  
*Sassafras albidum* is native to North America. Range may be expanded by planting. [See states reporting sassafras.](#)

**External Links:**  
[USDAFS Silvics of North America](#)  
[USDAFS Additional Silvics](#)  
[Landowner Factsheet](#)  
[USDA Plants Database](#)  
[Horticulture](#)

© Copyright 2012, Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, all rights reserved.  
 Photos and Text by: John Seiler, Edward Jensen, Alex Niemiera, and John Peterson.