

# Lindera benzoin

## (Northern) Spicebush

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

This ornamental shrub, which is common throughout most of the Mid-Atlantic Region, produces small, fragrant yellow flowers that cluster at the **nodes** of bare **stems** before leaves appear in early spring. The Virginia Native Plant Society named Spicebush as Wildflower of the Year in 2006.



Shrub	Male/Female Flowers, Spring/Early Fall Shrubs, Fruit
Height: 6½–16 feet	
Spread: 6–12 feet	
Bloom Color: Greenish-yellow	
Characteristics	
<a href="#">Deciduous</a> shrub with broad, rounded habit	
<a href="#">Dioecious</a> : separate male and female plants; plant sex may not be known for purchased plants	
<a href="#">Alternate</a> , <a href="#">obovate</a> to <a href="#">elliptic</a> , sea-green leaves	
Fragrant clusters of yellow flowers March to May	
Green <a href="#">ellipsoid drupes</a> ripen to scarlet on female plants in summer; male plant needed nearby for pollination	
Clear, rich yellow foliage in autumn (turns brighter yellow with a little sun)	
Attributes	
Tolerates <a href="#">clay</a> soil, dense shade, and drought	
No serious pests or diseases; <a href="#">deer</a> seldom severely damage	
Smooth, gray-brown bark speckled with light-colored lenticels attractive in winter	
Aromatic, herbal, therapeutic (berry/bark teas) uses	
High wildlife value; <a href="#">larval</a> host to ~13 <a href="#">lepidopterans</a> including Eastern Tiger, Palamedes, and Spicebush Swallowtails and Prometheus silkworm	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
<a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : Rich, well-drained	<a href="#">Eleagnus umbellata</a> - Autumn Olive
<a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Sun, Partial Shade, Shade	<a href="#">Euonymus alatus</a> - Burning Bush
<a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Moist	<a href="#">Ligustrum japonicum</a> & <a href="#">L. sinense</a> - Privets
Use as a hedge or in rain or woodland gardens	<a href="#">Lonicera</a> species - Bush Honeysuckles
<a href="#">Hardiness</a> : USDA Zones 5a–9b	<a href="#">Viburnum</a> species - Asian Viburnums
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Elaine Mills, U.S. National Arboretum, private garden, Arlington, VA, Green Spring Gardens and Bob Kline (middle right) Native Plant Garden, Potomac Overlook Regional Park