

Clethra alnifolia L.

Common Name	Summersweet, Sweet Pepperbush
Botanical Name	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>
Family	Clethraceae
Form	Shrub
Growth Habit	This deciduous shrub grows from 3'-8' tall and nearly as wide, and often forms thickets.
Bark	The stems of the Summersweet are brown.
Leaves	The dark green leaves are present alternately on stems and are elliptically shaped with pointed tips and serrations near the ends. They are from 2"-4" long and may be fuzzy underneath. Fall color is gold to orange.
Flowers	The white flowers are borne on spikes 4"-6" long at branch ends from early summer through early fall. They are fragrant and the individual flowers are about $\frac{3}{8}$ " across.
Fruit	The small, dry capsules persist on spikes through the winter.
Soil conditions	Summersweet is commonly found in wet, acidic soils but it has the ability to tolerate a variety of conditions.
Water	Once established, it can tolerate a relatively dry and well-drained situation.
Light Requirement	Full sun to nearly full shade
Native Growth Zone	8-9
Propagation	Seed, cuttings, suckers
Habitat	Found in pine flatwoods, swamps, and coastal hammocks.
Remarks	The flowers of the Summersweet are attractive to bees and butterflies. It is also a salt tolerant shrub, though it cannot be planted immediately behind dunes.

Works Consulted