

# ***Sassafras albidum* (Nutt.) Nees**

## **Sassafras**



### **Sources:**

Natural Resources Conservation Service. *PLANTS Database*. United States Department of Agriculture.

NC State. *North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox*.

The Laurel Family (Lauraceae)

This deciduous, flowering tree has three different leaf shapes: ovate/spoon-shaped, mitten-shaped and three-lobed/fork-shaped. All parts of the sassafras are aromatic.

### **Habitat:**

It's found in woodlands, abandoned fields, groves and along fences and roadsides. It prefers well-drained sandy, acidic soils.

### **Interesting Facts:**

Teas and drinks are made from the roots. The leaves are dried and ground to make filé powder, a common thickening ingredient in gumbo.

### **Fruit:**

Female trees produce pendant clusters of 0.4-inch long-inch bluish-black drupes borne in red cup-like receptacles on 1-inch-long red stalks. Fruit displays from June to July, but matures in September.

### **Flower:**

Male and female flowers appear on separate trees. The flowers are borne on 2-inch terminal clusters before the leaves. They have no petals but have six greenish-yellow sepals. They bloom from March to May.

### **Wildlife value:**

Fruits are eaten by a variety of birds and mammals. Some wildlife eat bark and wood. White-tailed deer browse twigs and foliage. Also supports imperial moth and spicebush swallowtail.