

# *Symplocos tinctoria*

## Horsesugar or Common sweetleaf



The Sweetleaf Family (Symplocaceae)

Common sweetleaf, also known as horsesugar, is a multi-trunked shrub to small tree with alternate, evergreen leaves, striped grayish bark and fragrant showy blossoms on bare branches in spring.

**Habitat:**

It prefers sandy thickets, alluvial woods, stream banks.

**Interesting Facts:**

The fresh leaves, with their sweet, “sour apple” flavor, are edible for humans and livestock. The leaves and roots are used to produce a yellow dye.

**Fruit:**

Dry drupes, .5” long, egg-shaped, orangish-brown, mature in late summer.

**Flower:**

Male and female flowers are in clusters of small creamy white petals with numerous stamens that appear as fuzzy globes before the new leaves appear.

**Wildlife value:**

Leaves and branches are a forage plant for mammals; flowers attract insects; and seeds are a source of food for some bird species.

**Sources:**

Friends of the Louisiana State Arboretum, *Featured Species*, for more information visit their website.

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

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

Source information compiled by Louisiana Tech’s School of Agricultural Sciences & Forestry.