

# Carolina Allspice

## *Calycanthus floridus*



Carolina allspice, is an erect to rounded deciduous native shrub in the Calycanthaceae family. It is found in the south east growing in shady woodlands and along streambanks. It grows 6-12' tall with an equal or slightly greater spread. It is commonly called sweetshrub and strawberry bush in reference to the showy fragrant blooms which have been described as combining hints of pineapple, strawberry, and banana. The aroma is stronger in higher temperatures and it is best to

purchase the plant in flower as the fragrances do vary so widely. The scientific name derives from the Greek words *kalyx* which means calyx and *anthos* which means flowers.

Sweetshrub grows best in average to rich, well-drained soil in anywhere from full sun to deep shade. It prefers some shade in hot summer afternoons and it will grow lankier and less dense in shade than in sun. It is tolerant of a wide range of soil textures and pH but prefers rich loams. Plant it 3 to 5 feet from other shrubs to give it adequate room to grow. It blooms in early spring before leaves emerge, with the leaves, and sporadically thereafter.



Prune immediately after flowering to shape or maintain compactness. It has a suckering habit meaning those suckering branches need to be maintained unless you want this plant to naturalize in your landscape. Prune the plant to shape immediately after flowering as the flowers are produced on last year's wood. Propagate this plant by seed.

It can tolerate brief periods of flooding, but it struggles in sandy soil and drought conditions. It withstands cold and heat, insect and disease pests, fire, and deer browsing. Plant it as a specimen or near a patio or walkway to enjoy its fragrance. Its form makes for a good screen or privacy hedge or plant it in the back of a shrub border or in a foundation planting. Consider this native in your cutting, sensory, or woodland garden.



## Quick ID Hints:

- Solitary maroon flowers on short axillary shoots
- Bark of deciduous shrub is aromatic when bruised
- Flowers are fruit-scented
- Leaves are opposite, grey-green & pubescent underneath

Medicinal use of Carolina Allspice: Antispasmodic, disinfectant. The plant contains an alkaloid that has a powerfully depressant action on the heart. A fluid extract has been used as an antiperiodic. A tea made from the root or bark has been used as a strong emetic and diuretic for kidney and bladder ailments. A cold tea has been used as eye drops in the treatment of failing eyesight. An ooze from the bark has been used to treat children's sores, whilst an infusion has been used to treat hives.

Edible parts of Carolina Allspice: The aromatic bark is dried and used as a substitute for cinnamon.

Other uses of the herb: Leaves contain small quantities of camphor. They can be used as an insect repellent, perfume and disinfectant.

## Medicinal Uses

Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.

Diuretic Emmenagogue Urinary

Emmenagogue. An infusion of the bark has been used to treat urinary problems

