

Sweetshrub *Calycanthus floridus*



Shrub with opposite branches, 1 to 3 m tall. Leaves opposite, deciduous, entire, lanceolate to ovate, 5 to 18 cm long, 2 to 8 cm wide, entire. Flowers axillary with many linear or lanceolate, maroon petals and sepals, very fragrant. Fruit dry, tough, obovate, fibrous, 8 cm or more long and 5 cm or more in diameter, drooping and somewhat resembling an insect gall. Found in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia; mostly in rich, deciduous woods along stream banks and other moist places. [Inset: flower]

Toxicity

An alkaloid is contained in the seed of the plant. It has been reported to be toxic to cattle. The plant is dangerous but not commonly eaten.

Symptoms

Strychnine-like action results in an increased excitability in which tetanic convulsions are exhibited.

Treatment

Use sedatives to control the convulsions caused by the strychnine-like action of the toxin.