



SASSAFRAS *Sassafras albidum* (Nutt.) Nees

Sassafras occurs in southern Maine in eastern Cumberland, southern Oxford and York counties, and is sometimes planted for ornament. Excellent specimens may be seen in the York Village cemetery.

The **bark** on young stems is thin and reddish-brown. On older stems, it becomes thick and scaly. The inner bark is very fragrant and sometimes chewed.

The **leaves** are alternate, very hairy when they first appear, losing the hair at maturity except on the midrib. They are light green and of 3 shapes: entire, mitten-shaped and three-lobed.

The **flowers** open in early spring with the first leaves, in racemes containing about 10–15 flowers.

The **fruit** ripens in September and October and is a blue, lustrous drupe that is supported on a fleshy, red stalk.

The **twigs** are green in color, smooth and aromatic when broken.

The **wood** is soft, weak, brittle, very aromatic, light brown and very durable in the soil. Historically, the roots and bark were distilled for oil of sassafras, used to perfume toiletries. The oil has been banned from use in foods in the US.



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Sassafras Circumference: 82" Height: 66' Crown Spread: 21' Location: York

