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Summersweet
Clethra alnifolia

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Sweet Pepperbush

Description:

One of the most fragrant of all shrubs for our gardens, and as a bonus, spikes of white flowers bloom in late summer when little else is in flower; neat, tidy habit of growth and good fall color; tends to sucker, needs moist acidic soil

Ornamental Features

Summersweet has masses of beautiful spikes of fragrant white flowers rising above the foliage from mid to late summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. It has green foliage throughout the season. The glossy round leaves turn an outstanding harvest gold in the fall. The fruit is not ornamentally significant.

Landscape Attributes

Summersweet is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with a shapely oval form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Summersweet is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Summersweet in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Summersweet in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ann Arbor 734-332-7900 155 N. Maple at Jackson	Clinton Twp. 586-286-6100 44850 Garfield Rd.	Dearborn Heights 313-278-4433 22650 Ford Rd.	Eastpointe 586-771-4200 22501 Kelly Rd.	Royal Oak 248-280-9500 4901 Coolidge Rd.	West Bloomfield 248-851-7506 6370 Orchard Lake Rd.
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- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Summersweet will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, preferring to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.

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