Calyptranthes pallens Spicewood, Pale Lidflower[1]

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen[2]

Introduction

Spicewood is an upright shrub or small tree with a unique spicy fragrance that gives this plant its more popular common name. This member of the Myrtle family has small light green, glossy leaves that have a pink to red tinge when young. The flowers open when a small lid flips up from the floral cup. These mostly inconspicuous, spring and summer blooms are white to beige in color and have a pleasant fragrance. The fruits change from green to orange, red, yellow, and then black. The tree and the fruits are appealing to many species of birds; the smaller birds use the tree as cover.

Figure 1. Leaf—*Calyptranthes pallens*: Spicewood, Pale Lidflower
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

Figure 2. Leaf—*Calyptranthes pallens*: Spicewood, Pale Lidflower
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General Information

Scientific name: *Calyptranthes pallens*

Pronunciation: kal-lip-TRANTH-eez PAL-lenz

Common name(s): spicewood, pale lidflower

Family: *Myrtaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Figure 3)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

1. This document is FPS96, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Revised March 2023. Visit the EDIS website at https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication.

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Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Credits: undefined

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: trained as a standard; screen; border; espalier; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; superior hedge

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Plant habit: oval

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: red; yellow; black

Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Spicewood may be used as a specimen or can be clipped into a hedge or maintained as a foundation plant. It can be trained into a small, multi-trunk tree.

Spicewood prefers a full sun to light shade location in the landscape. It is adaptable to many soils and is moderately drought tolerant. However, this plant grows best in moist to wet areas.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.