

AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY

Passive in spring, more interest in summer, but eye-catching in the fall.
Lacebark Inc, Dr. Carl Whitcomb, Stillwater, OK



Beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*, is a deciduous shrub, native to southeastern USA: roughly Missouri to Maryland and south. However, it can be grown in zone 6 and parts of zone 5 as a hardy perennial since it flowers and fruits on new growth. Found growing native along edges of wooded areas. Grows most dense and produces most fruits in full sun, yet will grow and contribute to the landscape in partial shade. May be cut to the ground after fruits drop and will grow with vigor the following spring. Quite tolerant of soils and soil conditions including drainage.

Native seedlings may reach eight feet tall, however, new cultivars are shorter and more compact and some have an even greater fruit population. Flowers begin in early summer, pink to light lavender, soon followed by small green b-b size fruits that grow to about 3/16 to 1/4 inch diameter and turn dark purple to violet with maturity beginning in mid September and continuing through October. Leaves are opposite on the stout stems, and a large whirl of flowers and fruits encircle the stem at each node.

Deer typically do not eat the foliage or stems, as they are covered by dense stiff hairs. However, deer love the fruits and unprotected plants may lose all fruits in one night. Occasionally caterpillars damage some leaves, but rarely is this a serious problem.

Currently seldom seen as a nursery item, but, new compact and dwarf or semi dwarf cultivars will change this in the future.