

## Sassafras

*Sassafras albidum*



**Description:** Aromatic tree or thicket-forming shrub with variously shaped leaves and narrow, spreading crown of short, stout branches. Height: 30 to 60 feet. Diameter: 1.5 feet, sometimes larger

**Leaves:** 3 to 5 inches long. Elliptical, often with 2 mitten-shaped lobes or 3 broad and blunt lobes; not toothed; base short pointed; long slender leafstalks. Shiny green above, paler and often hairy beneath; turning yellow, orange, or red in autumn

**Bark:** gray-brown; becoming thick and deeply furrowed

**Flowers:** 3/8 inches long; yellow-green; several clustered at end of leafless twigs in early spring; male and female usually on separate trees

**Fruit:** 3/8 inches long, elliptical shiny bluish-black berries; each in red cup on long red stalk, containing one shiny brown seed; maturing in fall

**Habitat/Range:** Moist, particularly sandy, soils of uplands and valleys, often in old fields, clearings, and forest openings. Found throughout Indiana

**Notes:** The roots and root bark supply oil of sassafras (used to perfume soap) and sassafras tea, and have been used to flavor root beer.