Natural history.

*Callicarpa americana* is considered a characterizing shrub of the Upland Hardwood Hammock plant association that is common over large areas of north-central Florida and adjacent south Georgia. "Characterizing," according to the Soil Conservation Service, means that "this species so commonly occurs in a community that you would expect to see it there at most locations supporting that community." The Upland Hardwood Hammock is a climax community with high species diversity where few pines occur and hardwoods dominate. Similar communities occur in some of the more fertile uplands of the middle and upper southeast U.S. Coastal Plain.

Beautyberry is also sometimes found in the Longleaf Pine/Turkey Oak association, Mixed Hardwood and Pine, South Florida Flatwoods, Cabbage Palm Flatwoods, and Wetland Hardwood Hammock plant communities in Florida. It is generally found at the edges of woods, in forest openings, in hedges, and along roadsides, but rarely in open country. It is more likely to be found in upland hardwood hammocks or mixed hardwood/pine forests than in pure natural pine stands. It is quite common in some planted pine plantations, where its presence indicates that the natural vegetation once included a prominent hardwood component.

It thrives in partial shade and fruits most heavily on branches exposed to the most sunlight.

Beautyberry in the nursery.

American beautyberry has good potential in the retail nursery trade, and also has good potential as a native shrub for ornamental plantings in the southeast United States, particularly on the sandy soils of the Coastal Plain. Beautyberry shrubs are subject to leaf spots, black mold, and various stem diseases, but these are rarely serious. In the greenhouse, they are particularly prone to scale insects.

The author has observed an occasional "sudden death syndrome" in which, well after transplanting, the entire plant or a large part of it from the ground up will die just a few days after appearing quite healthy. With the large planting of *callicarpa* in the nursery. The American beautyberry has good potential in the retail nursery trade, and also has good potential as a native shrub for ornamental plantings in the southeast United States, particularly on the sandy soils of the Coastal Plain.

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The author has observed an occasional "sudden death syndrome" in which, well after transplanting, the entire plant or a large part of it from the ground up will die just a few days after appearing quite healthy. With the large planting of *callicarpa* in the nursery, beautyberry should be seriously considered for ornamental use by the amateur and professional gardener and landscaper. Because the fruit of *callicarpa* is sought after by some of the best known southeastern songbirds — including robins, mockingbirds, catbirds, and brown thrashers — this shrub is desirable for planting around Florida homes and gardens. The Association of Florida Native Nurseries recently featured American beautyberry as a native shrub for landscape use in Florida.

Plants native to the plant community existing prior to development should receive preference for beautification and landscaping after development. The USDA Soil Conservation Service recommends planting *Callicarpa americana* as an ornamental in all areas where the natural plant community includes it, particularly Upland Hardwood Hammocks. This community is common in large areas of north-central Florida and adjacent south Georgia.

Other landscapes where *callicarpa* will usually do well include those habitats listed at the beginning of this article. The Association of Florida Native Nurseries (AFNN) recommends planting *callicarpa* at home sites in Coastal Uplands, Pine Flatwoods, Upland Mixed Forests, Scrub Forests (north Florida only), Upland Mesic Hardwood Forests, Sandhill, Cabbage Palm Forests, and Rocklands ecosystems. AFNN recommends planting beautyberry in road rights-of-way, medians, and under powerlines.

*Callicarpa* is readily transplanted from the nursery or the field. Transplanting from the field to cultivation, even in summer, has been fairly successful as long as digging, transport, and planting are done in cloudy or rainy weather and plants are watered regularly for about three weeks after transplanting.

It is recommended that beautyberry be pruned back in late winter or early spring to 9 to 14 cm (4 to 6 inches)
above the ground, because flowers and fruit are borne on new growth. With annual pruning, shrubs will usually not grow over 1.2 m (4 ft) high. If stems are winter-killed, the plant will usually grow back from the underground portion.

American beautyberry is available commercially from nearly 20 native plant nurseries in Florida. Twelve of these can provide quantities of over 250 plants if given sufficient notice, and several have this many on hand most of the time.

American beautyberry can fit into corner and border settings within native plant or xeric gardening designs. It is good for naturalizing or corner and border settings within native plant or xeric gardening designs. It should be treated as an herbaceous perennial in most gardens.

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