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BOT 155

Meicenheimer

19 September 2012

Sassafras albidum

Leaves

3-6" long, 2-4" wide

Simple

Alternate

Ovate/obovate

Entire

Palmately Veined (3)

Tips bluntly pointed

Bases wedge-shaped

Bright green on top, paler beneath

Some un-lobed or 2-lobed

Flowers

About 1/4" wide

Yellow/yellow-green

6-parted perianth

Perfect

Males and females on separate trees

Fruit

Drupe

Shiny

Dark blue/black

Bright red stalk

Fun fact: Sassafras tea is a common drink in rural areas where the tree is very popular.

It is made from the bark of the roots, but is actually reported to be carcinogenic.

Bark

Reddish brown

Deep, irregular fissures

Flat-topped ridges

Furry texture

Horizontal cracks

Buds

Ovoid

Pointed

Slightly hairy

Usually about same color as twig

Terminal bud about 1/3-3/5"

Twigs

Brittle

Yellowish/olive green

Crooked

Leaf scars alternate

Semi-round

Solitary bundle scar

Lacking stipule scars

Spicy aroma when crushed

3-4 scales

Green

Larger than lateral buds

General

Member of the Lauraceae, or Laurel, family (many common 'laurels' are actually heaths, of the Eircaceae family)

20-40' tall

Wood often used in furniture

Fun Fact: The Sassafras is often found growing in sandy or stony ground, but where the soil is still fertile.

Grows mainly in rural areas from Maine to Florida to Texas to Michigan