SIZE: Up to 2 m tall. LEAVES: Shiny, 5-10 cm long, and widest above the middle (obovate). The leaf edges are generally finely toothed from the middle to the tip. They are alternately arranged along the stem with 1-2 cm long leaf stalks that are slightly hairy.

STEM: Young branches are covered with woolly hairs and older branches are smooth.

FLOWERS: An elongate cluster (raceme) of fragrant flowers (5-15 cm long). The flowers are attached by short stalks (2-5 mm) to a central hairy axis and bloom from the base upwards. Each flower is small and white with 5 petals (each 5-7 mm long).

FRUITS: Dry, rounded capsules, 3 mm wide, containing numerous winged seeds. The dried fruits persist on the stem and resemble peppercorns.

NOTES: This species is found on only six lakes in NS (and Canada!).



Habitat:

River and lake shores.

Interesting point: The sweet, fragrance of this plant can be detected from quite a distance. It has been cultivated as an ornamental shrub in Europe for over 250 years.

Similar species: Canada Holly (*Ilex* verticillata) has larger, blunter teeth around the entire leaf edge, white flowers that are single or paired, and bright red berries.



Sweet Pepperbush

Clethra alnifolia





WLEY Shiny leaves

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Flower progression from buds to flower clusters to dried fruits