

# American Beautyberry *Callicarpa americana*

**Plant Type:** Native Flowering Shrub

**Sun Exposure:** Full Sun, Part Sun

**Season of Interest:** All

**Bloom Time:** Spring

**Bloom Color:** White, Purple berries

**Height:** 3 to 7 ft.

**Spread:** 4 to 6 ft.

**Spacing:** 5 ft.

**Water Needs:** Average

**Maintenance:** Prune old canes

**Soil Type:** Clay, Loam, Sandy, Rocky

**Soil pH:** Acidic, Neutral, Alkaline

**Soil Drainage:** Well drained

**Pests:** None

**Diseases:** None

**Wildlife:** Birds, Bees, Butterflies



**Description:** Beautyberry is a deciduous shrub native to the southeastern United States. It grows between 3 and 7 feet tall and 3 to 6 feet wide on average, though it's been known to reach 9 feet tall. It has a moderate growth rate, gaining around 1 to 2 feet per year until it is mature. While beautyberry's medium green foliage (ovate, toothed leaves on arching stems) is unspectacular and its flowers are fairly insignificant, its bright purple berries that grow in plump clusters put on a show. The berries appear in the late summer or early fall and persist into winter, providing visual interest for the landscape and food for wildlife. The berries are edible for both people and animals, and some people even use them to make jelly and other foods. For more information see: [plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/callicarpa-americana](https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/callicarpa-americana) .



**Care and Growing Tips:** Beautyberry shrubs generally do fine either in full sun or partial shade, meaning at minimum two hours of direct sun per day. They naturally grow on the edges of wooded areas where the amount of sunlight they get can vary. More sunlight will result in higher berry production. However, more sunlight will also increase the shrub's need for water.

Beautyberry shrubs prefer soils that are rich in organic matter, have good drainage, and have a pH that is slightly acidic to neutral. This mimics the forest floor where they naturally grow. However, they can tolerate most soil types, including clay soils, except those that are severely lacking in nutrients. These plants like moist soil, but they can tolerate somewhat dry conditions. Roughly 1 inch per week of water is ideal. But if your shrub is in a particularly sunny spot, and you've had hot weather, the plant will likely benefit from more water. Beautyberry shrubs thrive throughout their native area and don't have any particular temperature or humidity requirements. These shrubs generally do not need fertilizer unless you have very nutrient-poor soil. Because beautyberry shrubs bloom on new wood, they are generally pruned as desired for shaping in the late winter before new growth begins. Beautyberry's berries can last throughout the winter months, giving a bright pop of color to your winter garden. But you should still go forward with pruning because it will lead to better berry growth in the flowing season.