

SWEET PEPPERBUSH

Clethra alnifolia



Coastal sweet-pepper or summer sweet is a narrow, 6-12 ft., deciduous shrub, which often spreads into mounded clumps. A tall, many-branched, leafy shrub with spike-like, upright clusters of fragrant white flowers. The shrub has erect, multiple stems; exfoliating bark; and simple, oval, toothed leaves which turn dull yellow to orange in fall. The dense, narrow, cylindric flower spikes are often clustered together at branch ends. Fragrant flowers are white and are followed by brown capsules which persist through winter.

This shrub forms sizable patches and is remarkably free of any disease, insect, or physiological problems. Its dry fruiting capsules remain long after flowering and help identify this plant in winter. Throughout the growing season it requires a consistently moist soil for best performance and prefers an acid soil. Very little drought tolerance, especially in sunny sites.

