

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Lindera benzoin – SPICEBUSH [Lauraceae]

Lindera benzoin (L.) Blume, SPICEBUSH. Shrub, fall-deciduous, several-stemmed at base, in range to 400 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, typically 2-dimensional (plagiotropic), somewhat velveteen with hairs, initially pilose to villous, foliage aromatic (spicy) when crushed. **Stems:** cylindric, initially short-villous with upward-curved hairs aging glabrescent or appearing glabrous and glossy, twigs tough, glossy and reddish. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole mostly with 2 weak ridges on upper side (on the smallest leaves crescent-shaped in \times -section), 8–10+ mm long, light green, short-pilose, mostly somewhat twisted (secondary orientation of blades); blade obovate to elliptic (smaller leaves), (17–)35–95(–120+) \times (11–)25–45+ mm, tapered at base, entire and “ciliate” with upward-pointing hairs persisting on margins, the margins narrowly white, obtuse to acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib somewhat raised on upper surface and principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface initially short-pilose often aging glabrescent and slightly glaucous, lower surface pilose with persistent hairs and glaucous. **Inflorescence:** umbel-like clusters, axillary behind tips of young winter twigs, twigs leafless during flowers, at node having (1–)2–3 subsessile flower clusters arising from ancillary buds (surrounding axillary bud for future vegetative shoot), flowers (1–)2–4 per cluster, each cluster bracteate; cluster from bud with 1–2 bud scales and 2 pairs of bracts (opposite decussate), bud scales brown with raised midveins and soft, slender tip, bracts strongly cupped hemispheroid and mostly light green and pellucid, lower pair of bracts to 2.5 mm long, margin aging papery and split at tip, puberulent either on back or mostly along midline, upper pair of bracts (bractlets) to 3 mm long, glabrous or nearly so and margins colorless; pedicels ascending to spreading, unequal in each cluster, 1.5–4 mm long, light yellowish green, somewhat compressed top-to-bottom, puberulent at base and sometimes puberulent-ciliate along 1 or 2 edges. **Flower:** in range appearing bisexual, radial, 5–6 mm across; receptacle (hypanthium) funnel-shaped, ca. 1.5 mm long, light green, outer surface glabrous or sparsely puberulent, inner surface with nectar-producing glands next to bases of filaments; **tepals** 6 appearing in 1 whorl, arising from rim of hypanthium, spreading, equal, obovate to narrowly fan-shaped, $\pm 2.5 \times 1.3$ –1.8 mm, in range light yellowish green to colorless and somewhat wavy on outer margins, dotted with minute glands within tissue (pellucid dots), mostly faintly 1-veined; **stamens** 6 or 9 in whorls (fertile) and 6 staminodes in 2 inner whorls, the outer 6 fused at bases on tepals at top of hypanthium; of fertile stamens filaments spreading to ascending, somewhat compressed top-to-bottom, 1.3–1.7 mm long, translucent or sometimes greenish at base and tip, glabrous; anthers basifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.8 mm long, mostly light green by somewhat yellowish on inner surface, wide and shallowly notched, dehiscent inward by a pair of rising flaps (valves); pollen light yellow; staminodes < fertile stamens with fleshy, amorphous heads (= modified sterile anthers) and short, compressed filaments, heads 0.5–0.7 mm across, light yellow-green; **pistil** 1, ca. 0.8 mm long; ovary superior, \pm D-shaped, light green, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style with stigma not centered, fingerlike, ca. 0.2 mm long. **Fruit:** drupe, stalked appearing axillary to new shoot, 1-stoned with 1 seed, ellipsoid, 6–10 mm long, red; pulp reddish; stone (seed) broadly ellipsoid, 4–7 mm long, dark brown to reddish with pale patches; pedicel 3–5 mm long, short-hairy to glabrescent

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