

Clethraceae

white alder family

Shrubs and trees numbering 65 species comprise this monogeneric family. Typically bearing simple alternate leaves, these woody plants produce racemes or panicles of white flowers. Perfect flowers are usually regular and always hypogynous. Calyx is persistent. Nectar glands are present. Ovary is superior. Fruit is a capsule; seeds are winged.

***Clethra* L.**

sweet pepperbush

The ancient Greeks used *Clethra* as the genus of the alder, hence the association in names.

***Clethra alnifolia* L.**

Sweet Pepperbush; White Alder; clèthre à feuilles d'aulne

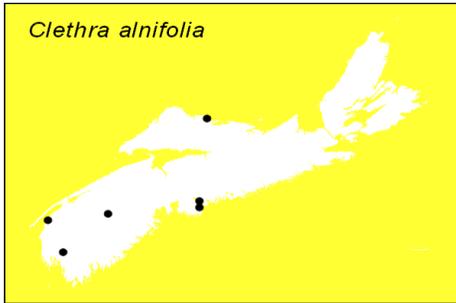


Photo by David Mazerolle

Shrubs may reach 2m in height. Leaves are oblong or obovate and serrate on the margins. Pubescent petioles may be 1–2cm long. Flowers are sweetly aromatic and borne on numerous racemes. Petals are distinct, 8mm in length. When not flowering these shrubs resemble *Ilex verticillata*, whose habitat it shares.



Photo by Martin Thomas



Flowers late, September and October.

Lacustrine headwaters and shores, swamps, thickets and in nearby sandy forest.

Its distribution in Nova Scotia is limited to Belliveau's Lake, Digby Co., Canoe Lake and Louis Lake, Yarmouth Co. Mill Lake, Pretty Mary Lake and Mudflat Lake, Annapolis Co. The mapped sites in Halifax County are introductions.

In Canada known only from NS; FL and TX.