

PONDSPICE

Litsea aestivalis (L.) Fernald

Synonyms: *Laurus aestivalis* L.

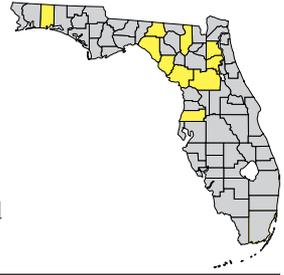
Litsea geniculata (Walter) G. Nicholson

Family: Lauraceae (laurel)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S2

Legal Status: US—Mgmt Concern FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—OBL FL—OBL



Dan Hipes

Field Description: Shrub or small tree to 15 feet tall. **Twigs** are zigzag and odorless. **Leaves** 0.5 - 1.5 inches long, deciduous, simple, alternate, somewhat leathery, smooth, oblong to lance-shaped, margins entire and slightly thickened. **Flowers** tiny, with 6 yellow **sepals** and no petals, usually in clusters at the tips of branches. **Female and male flowers** on separate plants; **female flowers** with 1 ovary and 9 non-functional stamens, **male flowers** with 9 stamens, each with 4 openings on the anther. **Fruit** fleshy, red, round.

Similar Species: Flowers of common spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) are very similar, but its leaves are much larger than pondspice leaves; its twigs have a spicy smell and are not zigzag; fruit is oval.

Related Rare Species: See bog spicebush (*Lindera subcoriacea*) in this guide.

Pondspice

Litsea aestivalis

Habitat: Edges of baygalls, flatwoods ponds, and cypress domes. May form thickets around edges of ponds.

Best Survey Season: Flowers late winter–early spring; bright red fruits are easiest to see in the fall.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, LA, GA, SC, NC, MD, VA.

Conservation Status: 15 populations are known in FL, only 5 on conservation lands. Clearing and draining of wetlands, especially for silviculture, have greatly reduced this species' habitat.

Protection & Management: Avoid draining and logging wetlands, especially seasonally wet ponds. Avoid placing roads and firebreaks in transition zones between ponds and flatwoods. Allow fires in uplands to burn into wetlands.

References: Coile 2000, Godfrey 1988, Kral 1983, Nelson 1996, Patrick et al. 1995, Tobe et al. 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

