

## **Ruby Spice Clethra** (*Clethra alnifolia* 'Ruby Spice')

The Ruby Spice Clethra commonly called summersweet, is a deciduous (leaves fall off in late autumn) shrub that is native to swampy woodlands, wet marshes, stream banks and seashores, often in sandy soils, along the coast from Maine to Florida and west to Texas.



**Plant Care:** It easily grows in moist soils in full sun to part shade. Prefers part shade and consistently moist, acidic, sandy soils. Soils should not be allowed to dry out. Tolerates clay soils typical in the Atlanta area. Tolerates full shade. Prune if needed in late winter.

This deciduous shrub typically grows to 3-6' (less frequently to 8') tall and is noted for producing a mid to late summer bloom of sweetly fragrant white flowers which appear in narrow, upright panicles (2-6" long). Flowers give way to dark brown seed capsules (1/8" diameter) which may persist into winter. Mature stems have scaly, dark gray to brown black bark. Oblong, glossy dark green leaves (to 3-4" long) turn various colors but generally attractive shades of yellow to golden brown in fall. Flowers are very attractive to butterflies and bees.

**Watering:** Water 3 times weekly after planting for 6 weeks, then keep the soil fairly moist afterwards. Do not flood the soil.

### **References:**

[www.missouribotanicalgarden.org](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org)