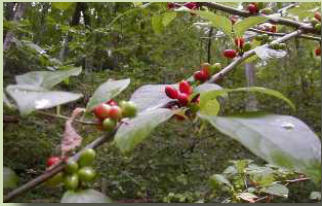


### Plant Parade Fragrant Plants

If you know where to look, what to crush, and when to sniff, there are some wonderfully fragrant treasures to be found on our trails. Plants have odors for a variety of reasons, to attract pollinators, repel pests or as a by-product of another process. Regardless of the reason, we can enjoy many pleasant scents on a late summer stroll.



**Spicebush**, *Lindera benzoin*, is an understory shrub that sports beautiful yellow foliage in the fall. It is a host plant for the spectacular Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly and its berries are a favorite of birds and other wildlife. People have used the twigs and leaves of this shrub to make tea, but on our trails you can crush a dried leaf or scratch a bit of bark to release the odor. The berries are fragrant too and were used as a substitute for allspice during the Revolutionary War.

A common plant in the sandy soil of the Meadow Mouse Trail is **Sweet Fern**, *Comptonia peregrina*. Although it is not a fern, the leathery leaves of this small deciduous shrub look a little like a fern. When the leaves are crushed, they are quite aromatic. Sweet fern is able to fix its own nitrogen, so it is often found in poor soils where other plants have difficulty becoming established.



If you're walking through a dry field and notice the pleasant scent of maple syrup, you may have discovered a patch of **Sweet Everlasting**, *Gnaphalium obtusifolium*. This annual plant reseeds easily and blooms in late summer and early fall. It is a member of the aster family and is recognizable by the small white flowers and the whitish woolly stem. Although you can often smell Sweet Everlasting when you are passing by, gently rubbing a leaf between your fingers will give you a good whiff of this pleasantly sweet fragrance.



### Nature Notes

Many fragrant plants can be found as weeds around our homes and in other disturbed areas.



**Pineapple weed**, *Matricaria discoidea*, can be found in compacted soils

of disturbed areas throughout the United States. The leaves are sweet-smelling when crushed.

When the root of **Queen Anne's Lace**, *Daucus carota*, is scratched or bruised, it is a bit orange and smells like carrot.



A member of the mint family, **Creeping Charlie**, *Glechoma hederacea*, populates many backyard lawns and shady trailside areas. When crushed it gives off a strong minty odor.



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