

BEAUTYBERRY

(*Callicarpa*)

John Frett

Callicarpa or beautyberry is a large genus of 140 species globally ranging from temperate to subtropical environments. The genus is a member of the Verbenaceae* family comprised of mainly herbaceous plants but also woody genera such as *Vitex*. Beautyberries are medium sized (typically 4–8 feet) shrubs that grow well in full sun to light shade. Plants are nearly indestructible once established. They thrive in moist soils but tolerate periods of drought. Plants will wilt if soil dries completely, but recover rapidly once watered. Beautyberry flowers and fruits on current year's growth. Plants are vigorous and in late winter or early spring can be pruned to the ground to reduce the height and create a more compact, dense habit. If not cut to the ground annually, rejuvenative pruning every three to four years will remove dead twigs and older, less productive stems.

Beautyberries are named for the plentiful purple fruit produced annually. The genus name comes from two Greek words, *callos* (beauty) and *carpos* (fruit) and that's what this genus possesses, beauty in the fruit; the fall-early winter display a showstopper. The flowers range from white to lavender and are produced in small clusters about ¾ inches in diameter in the leaf axil. Flowering begins in July, continuing as new growth is produced into September. As the last of the inflorescences appear in September, the earlier flower clusters mature into berries and begin to turn. The fruit clusters turn color from the base of the stem to the tip, completing their transformation in late September or October. Pearl-like berries grace the stems and remain colorful into December and January before dropping to the ground, uneaten. Multiple plants in close proximity will boost berry production. While the flowers are numerous throughout summer, they may go fairly unnoticed due to their size and leaves that cover them. Most species have white-fruited varieties. These varieties lack the genes for purple pigmentation, thus flowers and fruits are white. Even the slight purple pigmentation in the stems and petioles is lacking.

Leaves vary by species, some being small and fine textured, others larger and bolder textured. Fall foliage is typically yellow but some species turn burgundy or bronze purple. Recently developed cultivars exploit the purple foliage pigmentation on new foliage. This coloration may or may not last into the summer although darkening typically returns as cool fall weather sets in. The dark foliage provides an excellent contrast for the fall fruit display.

*Many botanists have reclassified *Callicarpa*, placing it in the Lamiaceae family.



Callicarpa Pearl Glam™
Photo: Melinda Zoehrer



Callicarpa americana
Photo: Rick Darke



Callicarpa americana
'Lactea'

Photo: John Frett



Callicarpa americana
'Welch's Pink'

Photo: John Frett



Callicarpa dichotoma
'Duet'

Photo: John Frett



Latin Name	Common Name	Mature Size	Light	Soil	Pot Size, Plant Size	Price
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Callicarpa 'Kolmapurgi' Plump & Plentiful™

Purple Giant Beautyberry	5-6	○●●●	1 g, 2-3	\$25
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(Sometimes marketed in the trade as *Callicarpa* '05-132') An exceptional plant. Inflorescences contain up to four times the numbers of flowers. More flowers mean more bright purple fruit, significantly enhancing the fall-winter display.

Callicarpa 'NCCX1'

Purple Pearls™ Beautyberry	4-6	○●●●	3 g, 4-5	\$35
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Cross of *C. dichotoma* × *C. kwantungensis*. Unique for the dark purple foliage as it emerges in the spring on arching branches. Foliage color fades some during the summer but enhances with the onset of fall. Summer flowers are pink/purple maturing to abundant purple-violet berries by October. The dark foliage sets off the purple foliage for a stunning fall display; foliage eventually turns yellow.

Callicarpa 'NCCX2'

Pearl Glam™ Beautyberry	3-5	○●●●	3 g, 4-5	\$35
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Another dark purple foliaged selection with clusters of light pink summer flowers and mauve-purple fruit in the fall into the winter. This cultivar produces more erect stems resulting in a more upright habit suitable for narrower garden situations. Leaves take on purple hues in autumn.

Callicarpa americana

American Beautyberry	5-8	○●●●	1 g, 1-2	\$25
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Our native beautyberry is slightly larger in foliage, fruit, and size. The 3-6 inch foliage is densely hairy and creates a bold garden texture. The violet to magenta fruits are the largest of any of the species providing a stunning fall into early winter display, contrasting well against the chartreuse autumnal foliage. Plants may suffer winter dieback but once established will re-sprout from the ground in spring. N

Callicarpa americana var. *lactea*

White American Beautyberry	5-8	○●●●	1 g, 1	\$25
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(Limited quantity) This variety of our native has similarly large fruit but pure white. The light colored fruit stand out more dramatically against the green summer leaves and chartreuse autumn foliage. Seedlings typically produce white fruit. N

Callicarpa americana 'Welch's Pink'

American Beautyberry	5-8	○●●●	1 g, 1-2	\$35
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(Limited quantity) When I first saw images of the fruit in a catalog, I assumed it had been enhanced. When I received the plants, I saw the pink colored fruit were actually pink! As large as the species, the light pink fruit are a distinct departure from any other selection available. This color form appears to breed true when grown from seed. N
PATRON EVENING ONLY

Callicarpa bodinieri var. *giraldii* 'Profusion'

Bodinier's Beautyberry	4-6	○●●●	1 g, 1-2	\$30
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(Limited quantity) New leaves emerge with a bronze-purple tinge, fade to rich green during the summer and turn pinkish purple in fall. Plants are more distinctly upright with arching branches that produce a plethora of lilac flowers in the summer. Fruits are shimmering lilac in loose clusters that ripen in October. Fruit tends to drop after repeated hard freezes.

Callicarpa dichotoma 'Duet'

Variegated Purple Beautyberry	5-6	○●●●	1 g, 1	\$25
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The crisp, marginal white variegation on the foliage make a bold statement in any garden, particularly in light shade where leaves seem to glow. The white variegated foliage will tolerate full sun without burning. Plants lack the purple pigmentation of the species so summer flowers are white, as is the fall/winter fruit.

Callicarpa dichotoma 'Issai'

Photo: Rick Darke

Latin Name	Common Name	Mature Size	Light	Soil	Pot Size, Plant Size	Price
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Callicarpa dichotoma 'Early Amethyst'

Purple Beautyberry 4-6 ○●☁ 3 g, 2-3 \$35

A somewhat more compact plant, 'Early Amethyst' produces prolific early lilac fruit on arching stems. Young foliage emerges with a slight purple hue that fades as the foliage matures. The purple blush returns to the leaves in the autumn.

Callicarpa dichotoma 'Issai'

Purple Beautyberry 5-8 ○●☁ 7 g, 3-4 \$45

'Issai' is a robust plant that produces pink-lavender flower clusters and heavily fruits at an early age. The vigorous growth arches over providing a fountain of purple fruit for fall and winter display. Plants can easily be pruned to the ground in late winter and still produce copious fruit the same year.

Callicarpa dichotoma 'Shiji Murasaki'

Wine Spritzer™ Variegated Beautyberry 4-6 ○●☁ 1 g, 2-3 \$45

(Limited quantity) (Syn: *Callicarpa dichotoma* 'sPg-3-013') Green foliage heavily spritzed with cream complemented by wine-colored new stem growth. The boldly variegated foliage brightens up the garden all summer long. Unlike other variegated selections the summer flowers are lavender, producing bright purple fruit adorning the branches through the fall and early winter. Light flowerer and berry producer, with foliage carrying the main show. **PATRON EVENING ONLY**

Callicarpa japonica 'Leucocarpa'

Japanese Beautyberry 4-6 ○●☁ 1 g, 1-2 \$30

(Limited quantity) Japanese beautyberry produces slightly smaller fruit than other species but is as prolific, particularly when planted in groups. 'Leucocarpa' produces white fruits, quite a treasure, plant where it will be noticed. When planted with purple fruited selections and seedlings are grown out, the plants produced fruit ranging from white to pale lavender, to dark purple and many shades in between.

Callicarpa dichotoma
'Early Amethyst' flowers

Photo: John Frett



Callicarpa dichotoma
'Early Amethyst'

Photo: Melinda Zoehrer



QUICK REFERENCE FOR CULTURAL SYMBOLS

All plant heights listed in catalog are in feet. No inches are used.

In order to help you select the right plant for your gardening needs, we have included the symbols below to indicate plant needs. These are broad guidelines, as plants can often withstand a wider range of conditions. Plants that prefer part shade may grow well in full sun if there is adequate soil moisture during hot, dry spells. Similarly, plants that prefer moist soils may grow well in drier sites if some shade is provided, especially midday.

Light Recommendations

○ full sun ● partial sun ● full shade

Soil Moisture Recommendations

☁ dry soil ☁ moist soil ☁ wet soil

🦋 = Lepidoptera use plant as Larval (caterpillar) food source

🐦 = Birds utilize plant as food source & nest building material

👤 = People consume plant fruit or leaves

Native

"N" after the plant description indicates plants are native to the Eastern U.S. We consider cultivars of native plants to be native, regarding them as selections from variants in the population.



Callicarpa japonica berries in the wild on Honshu Island, Japan

Photo: Rick Darke