

## REDBAY

*Persea borbonia* (L) Spreng.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Red bay persea, Swampbay persea, Swampbay.

FORM: 60-70 feet high with trunk 2 1/2-3 feet in diameter, stout, erect branches forming a dense shapely head, thick, fleshy yellow roots.

BARK: 1/2-3/4 inch thick, dark red, irregularly divided into broad, flat ridges, surface separating into thick appressed scales.

TWIGS: At first, many-angled, light brown, glabrous, or coated with pale rufous pubescence; in second year, terete, green, and smaller.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, oblong to oblong-lanceolate, entire, may be contracted into a long rounded point at apex, become thick and coriaceous, bright green and lustrous above, pale and glaucous below, 3-4 inches long, 3/4-1 1/2 inch wide, with thick revolute margins.

FLOWERS: Peduncles glabrous, 1/2-1 inch long; calyx pale yellow or creamy-white, about 1/8 inch long with thin lobes, ciliate on the margin.

FRUIT: A berry 1/2 inch long, dark blue or nearly black, very lustrous, flesh dry; seed ovoid, slightly pointed.

WINTER BUDS: 1/4 inch long, coated with rufous tomentum.

WOOD: Heavy, hard, very strong, rather brittle, close-grained, bright red, lighter sapwood of 4-5 layers.

USES: Pulp, rough lumber. Historical uses: cabinet-making, interior finish, shipbuilding.

HABITAT: Prefers rich soil, borders of streams and swamps, occasionally in dry sandy loam.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Dark red bark and bright red wood; dark green and thick coriaceous leaves with thick revolute margins; small winter buds coated with thick rufous tomentum.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Reported from Montgomery, Dallas, Pike, Monroe, Conecuh, Mobile, Baldwin, and Escambia Counties.

### EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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|---|---|
| 1. A flowering branch                       | 7. A stamen of the third series, showing basal glands, front view |
| 2. Diagram of a flower                      | 8. An ovule   |
| 3. A flower                                 | 9. A fruiting branch  |
| 4. Vertical section of a flower             | 10. Vertical section of a fruit                                   |
| 5. A stamen of the outer series, front view | 11. An embryo   |
| 6. A staminodium, front view                |   |



Pet-sea borbonia (L) Spreng.