

October Plant of the Month:



***Gaylussacia baccata*(Wang) K. Kock; Black Huckleberry**

The Plant of the Month for October is Black Huckleberry, *Gaylussacia baccata*. This common, native shrub is present within most New Jersey forests formed on acidic soils. This shrub is a member of the Ericaceous family. It occupies most forests on the Coastal Plain and non-calcareous northern NJ upland habitats, where it forms dense ground cover. The plant many occupy acres of forest floor, represented by a relatively few individuals. This is so because of its rhizomatous habitat that spreads the shrub in a colonial manner wherever it becomes established.

The plant was selected for the plant of the month because of its widespread distribution and its vibrant red colored leaves. These become an eye catching display during the crisp and cool days of October. The shrub flowers in April, sets fruit in June that ripens by July. This shrub is one of the State's most dominant plants, occupying acres and acres of upland where native forest exists.

Be sure to get out into the Ridge and Valley mountains or the Coastal Plain forests during this month to see the display created by this all so common native huckleberry.