

## 2015 November *Guess that Plant*



*Viburnum nudum* L., Possumhaw

The November *Guess that Plant* is a native New Jersey shrub confined to acidic wetlands. Possumhaw is a US Fish and Wildlife Service-listed obligate wetland shrub (OBL). It is often overlooked, yet it is a common component of many wetlands where standing water is frequent. It is a shrub associate of red maple hardwood and Atlantic white cedar swamps, specifically on the Coastal Plain. In the southern portions of its range, possumhaw often grows with rarities such as swamp pink, *Helonias bullata*. The mature berry is dark blue, yet starts its maturity in September as a rose pink color as shown in the monthly photo. Like many winter maturing berries, this plant provides a nutritious bounty for migrating birds and winter residents alike. Early Native Americans used the plant seeds as both food and as a tonic for a variety of ailments (Moerman, 1999; *North American Ethnobotany*).

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