

January's *Guess that Plant*



Sweet Fern, *Comptonia peregrina* (L.) J.M. Coult.

The January *Guess That Plant* was the widespread sweet fern and a member of the wax myrtle family, the Myricaceae. The plant occupies some of the driest soils in the state. It is a colonial shrub with the ability to expand using weakly rooted stolons. The name implies a fern yet the plant is woody dicot more closely related to birches, alders and hickories. One of its common names is "chigger bush". In late July and August the early stages of the lone star tick hitch a ride from these plants, making your visit to Southern New Jersey a memorable one!

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