

## 2019 May *Guess that Plant*



*Alnus serrulata* (Ait.) Willd., Smooth or Common Alder

The *May Guess that Plant* was a native, obligate, wetland shrub with a Statewide distribution with herbarium collections from all twenty one of New Jersey's counties. *Alnus serrulata* is a member of the Hazel family, Corylaceae, along with hazelnuts and the birches. This family's characteristic seed cones are distinguishing features that are specifically visible on alders most of the year. *Alnus serrulata* is also identified by its speckled branches, where its dotted lenticels differ from the white linear lenticels of *Alnus rugosa*, the Speckled Alder.

*Alnus serrulata* is found in wetlands where openings provide sufficient sunlight. Lake edges, stream banks, persistent meadows, and bogs are habitats where I have seen this plant. The shrub is rarely the dominant plant, but often found within a thicket of other wetland shrubs. The plant is not salt tolerant, so its presence east of State Highway Route 9, and south of Salem, Cumberland counties Route 553 is limited by the saline tidal waters of the Atlantic barrier island and Delaware bays.

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