

## Small understory shrub with winter berries: Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*)

**Description:** Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*), also called Indian Currant, Snowberry or Buckbush, is in the Honeysuckle family. It is native to the eastern part of Texas, west to the western Cross Timbers and south to the Edwards Plateau. It is a small deciduous woody shrub, growing to 2 to 4 feet tall, with a mounding to sprawling growth habit. It has opposite dull-green leaves that can be up to 2 inches long, but are usually less than 1 inch long. The leaves are smooth and oval. Coralberry may shed its bark on older wood. Coralberry is rhizomatous – it forms runners; thus, Coralberry may form colonies.



Photo courtesy of Kathy Saucier

**Flowers and Fruit:** Coralberry has indistinct ¼ inch pinkish-white flowers in the summer. Some of Coralberry’s ornamental value comes from the clusters of reddish-lavender to bright pink ¼ inch berries that remain on the plant throughout the winter.

**Planting sites:** Coralberry does best in partial and dappled shade, but also tolerates a mostly-sun condition. It prefers loamy and rocky soils, but will tolerate other conditions as long as it has good drainage. Avoid planting Coralberry in areas where it may experience “wet feet” or it may rot. Wet conditions may also lead to mildew on the leaves; this usually does not damage the plant.

**Watering Instructions:** Like most Texas natives, Coralberry will need supplemental water during the first growing season. After it is established, it will thrive with existing rainfall. It is very drought tolerant.

**Comments:** In the wild, Coralberry is often found as an understory shrub in Post-Oak woods. In the garden, Coralberry is grown for its clusters of berries that provide winter interest. It also provides cover for birds and is the larval food for the Snowberry Clearwing Moth. Consider using Coralberry as an alternative to Nandina cultivars in your landscape.

Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. Thank you for using native plants in your landscapes.

Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas Meetings are the 4th Thursday in Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Sep & Oct, TWU’s ACT building 6:30 pm, 2nd floor.