



ROOTED IN RELATIONALITY

CASSAFRAS

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION
TO
THIS PLANT
AND ITS MEDICINE



BY TIGERLILY KAYNOR

Nice to meet you! Some of my names are

Tsalagi, English lettering
KANSDAJI

Tsalagi, Cherokee Syllabary

Pronounced
"KAN STA STI"

* Did you know TSALAGI is another name for the Cherokee language?

Sassafras albidum
Scientific nomenclature

Sassafras
Common English name



Can you identify me?

Look for my three distinct leaf shapes! They are one of my most unique features.



I also produce tiny yellow-white flowers in the spring!



I can be harder to identify in the winter because I drop my leaves. You can look for my bright green twigs and tiny whitish buds!



In the fall, you can see my tiny blue fruit!



Depending on where I live I can vary in size: small to tall!

My leaves are green most of the year. In the fall they change to red, yellow, green, and everything in between!



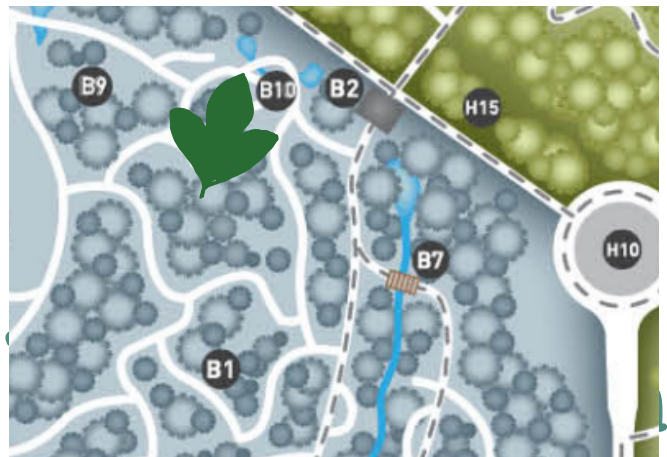
Where can you find Sassafras?



The green area on this map shows Sassafras's native range – the places it has lived for hundreds of years...

You can visit Sassafras in Duke Gardens!

Look here to find it! →



This Sassafras is near location B10 in the Blomquist Garden of Native Plants. Pick up a map of the entire garden when you visit to find even more!

SASSAFRAS MEDICINE

IS VERY POWERFUL...

AND CAN COME IN MANY FORMS.



INGESTIBLE MEDICINE SHOULD ONLY BE
PREPARED AND ADMINISTERED BY

PEOPLE WITH TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE.

SASSAFRAS IS KNOWN TO:

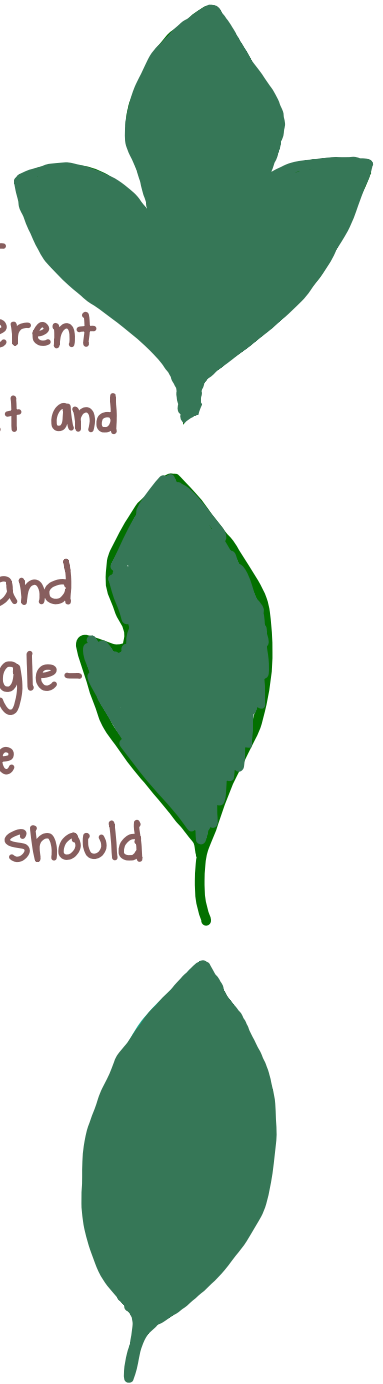
- TREAT KIDNEY PROBLEMS
- PURIFY BLOOD
- PROMOTE SWEATING
- AND MORE! ASK SOMEONE IN YOUR
COMMUNITY WHAT THEY KNOW
ABOUT SASSAFRAS!



SOME MEDICINE FROM SASSAFRAS

In one story, it is said that the different shapes of Sassafras leaves represent different genders. Three lobed leaves represent Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. Masculine genders are represented by leaves with two lobes and feminine genders are represented by single-lobed leaves. Sassafras reminds us that there are many ways to express gender, and all should be celebrated!

To read the full story, check out the book "Sassy Sassafras" by the Paths (Re)Membered Project!



! S O S !

SAVE OUR SASSAFRAS

Despite documented benefits and generations of relationality and wisdom, using Sassafras was **OUTLAWED** by the United States FDA. Sassafras contains a potentially dangerous chemical, **SAFROLE**. Bans like these threaten and de-value Indigenous relationships, making Sassafras medicine less accessible.



Sassafras has also been threatened by the invasive ambrosia beetle, which spreads deadly Laurel wilt fungus from tree to tree.

Want to build your relationship with Sassafras?

1. Find a Sassafras friend near you! Use your senses to observe it - what do you notice? How does interacting with Sassafras make you feel?
2. Can you think of a story or lesson that can be represented by Sassafras' leaves?
3. Find a Sassafras leaf (this might be hard in the Winter!) Draw or trace the leaf. Can you incorporate this shape into a larger drawing?



LOOKING FOR MORE?

This is zine #1 in the series
ROOTED IN RELATIONALITY.

Learn more about Sassafras,
connect with other resources
and discover other zines by
scanning this QR code!



Rooted in Relationality
was created by Tigerlily
as part of Duke Garden's
Equity Through Storytelling
Program. Learn more about
her work and the program
by scanning this QR code!

