

SASSAFRAS.

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Sassafras Sassafras (L.) Karst.¹

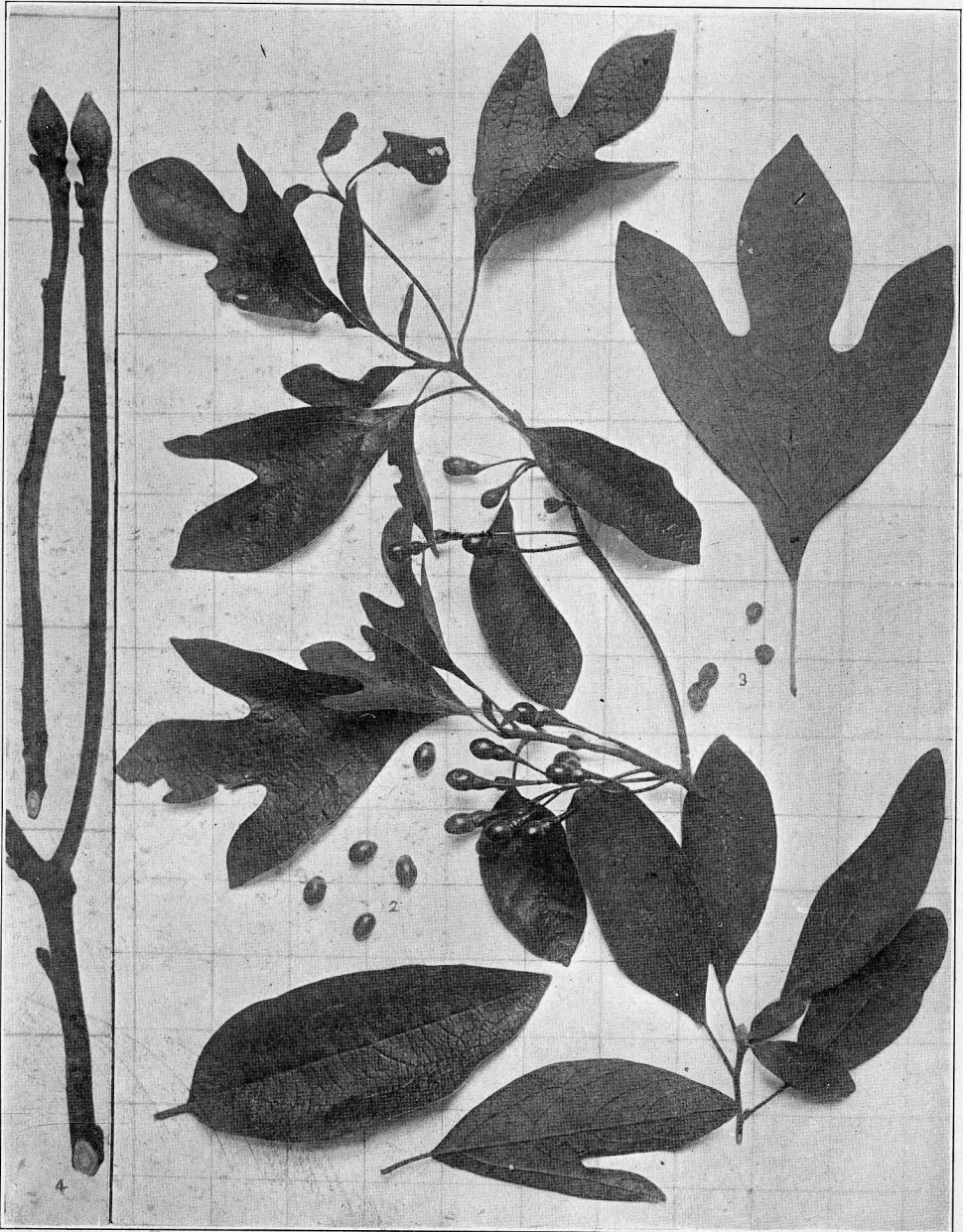


Fig 256. Branchlet with mature leaves and fruit, 1; isolated drupes, 2; same in section, 3; branchlets in winter, 4.

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The Sassafras is a tree sometimes 80 or 90 ft. in height, with trunk from 4-6 ft. in diameter, but is usually a considerably smaller tree and in the northern part of its range is reduced to a shrub. When isolated its stout contorted branches ramify and ultimately divide into a profusion of branchlets, forming a distinctly flat-topped irregular oblong head of characteristic aspect. It is a handsome tree at all seasons of the year; in the winter on account of the unobstructed view of its red-brown furrowed bark and smooth green branchlets; in spring on account of the tufts of pale green velvety leaves and golden flowers, subtended by enlarged showy bud-scales which terminate each branchlet; in summer on account of its rich green leaves of many shapes and sizes and red-stemmed clusters of blue berries, and in autumn on account of the delicate red and yellow tints of its autumnal garb.

The wood of which a cu. ft. when absolutely dry weighs 31.42 lbs., is soft and brittle but very durable and is used in the manufacture of pails and buckets, for fence-posts, rails, etc.²

Leaves as described for the genus, 3-7 in. long. *Flowers* appear in April and May. *Fruit* ripens in August and September. See generic description, this being the only species.³

1. Syn. *Sassafras officinale* N. & E.
2. A. W., II, 32.
3. For genus see p. 436.

