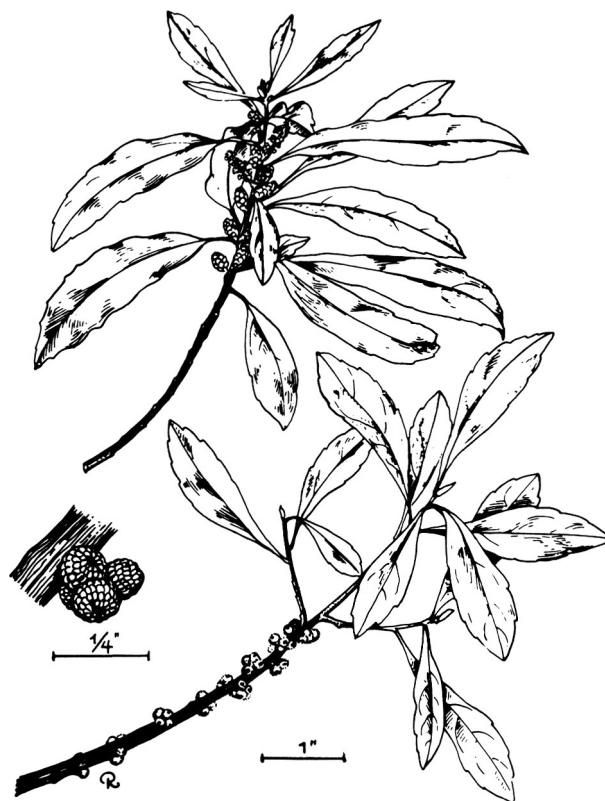


233. *MYRICA CERIFERA* L. and other sp. (MYRICAEAE) — Bayberry, Wax Myrtle

American settlers made wax and candles from the berries. (One bushel of fruit yields 4 lb wax.) French settlers in Canada added the leaves to soups as a condiment. "The leaves and berries form an attractive and agreeable substitute for the tropical bay-leaves for use in savoring soups, etc. They are really good!"<sup>13</sup> Leaves are also steeped to make a tea. Leaves of the European *M. gale* were used for hop in producing beer, and as moth repellent and insecticide. Recommended as a good foliage plant, evergreen or nearly so, and susceptible to pruning and shaping into hedges. The principle use of the wax in 1958<sup>205</sup> was for Christmas candles, but it was also in soap, ointments, leather-polishing formulations, etching, and medicinals. It seems as though the uses of *M. cerifera*, *M. gale*, and *M. pensylvanica* are all interspersed interchangeably with each other in the literature and probably in nature as well. To the north, *M. pensylvanica* replaces *M. cerifera*. Middle-aged Americans will be delighted to learn, if what Tierra says is true, that a fermentation of bayberry tea "can be applied externally at night to relieve, cure, and prevent varicose veins."<sup>28</sup>

The bark was used in folk remedies for nasal polyps, powdered roots, and wax for cancerous ailments.<sup>4</sup> The powdered root, with or without blood root, has been applied to indolent ulcers and scrofulous tumors. Reported to be alterative, astringent, cordial, cardiostimulant, deobstruent, diaphoretic, emetic, laxative, narcotic, sternutatory, stimulant, stomachic, sudorific, tonic, and vermifuge. The bayberry is a folk remedy for boils, cankers, carbuncles, catarrh, cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, fever, goiter, headache, hemorrhage, hematochezia, hematoptysis, hepatitis, jaundice, leucorrhea, metrorrhagia, pharyngitis, pyorrhea, scarlet fever, scrofula, sores, sore throat, stomatitis, typhoid, ulcers, and uterosis.<sup>32</sup> Morton says the astringent, slightly narcotic wax has been "successfully employed in epi-