

American beautyberry named newest Texas Superstar

Native shrub recognized for adaptability, beauty and wildlife benefit

[Adam Russell](#)

With clusters of vivid purple berries that attract birds and pollinators, the resilient and vibrant American beautyberry has earned its place as the newest Texas Superstar plant.

Andrew King, Ph.D., [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#) assistant professor and ornamental specialist in the [Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences](#), Overton, said the American beautyberry is valued by gardeners for its adaptability, toughness and ornamental appeal. Native to the southeastern U.S., including much of the eastern half of Texas, the plant thrives in a wide range of soils and conditions across the state.

"This plant is extremely versatile," King said. "We've seen it perform well from the Rio Grande Valley to the Panhandle and even in some West Texas landscapes. It's drought tolerant, handles the cold, and really doesn't have many pest or disease issues. It's a perfect low-maintenance choice for Texas gardeners."





Provides striking color in landscapes

The deciduous shrub typically grows 6-7 feet tall and equally wide in landscapes, though it can reach up to 10 feet in spaces that allow growth. American beautyberry produces small white-to-pink flowers in late spring and summer, followed by clusters of striking purple, pink or white berries in late summer through fall.

The berries are highly attractive to birds and small mammals, and the flowers draw pollinators like bees and butterflies.

"The berries are the real show," King said. "They're glossy, iridescent purple, and you'll see them from August through October. There are also white- and pink-fruited forms available, which can add something unique to a landscape."

Low-maintenance, practical uses How to grow American beautyberry

- **Soil:** Extremely adaptable; tolerates a wide range of soil textures and pH.
- **Water:** Relatively drought tolerant once established; wilts early but recovers quickly. Prefers moist sites or partial shade in drier locations.
- **Sun:** Grows in full sun to partial shade; more compact in sunnier spots, leggier in shade.
- **Fertilizer:** Do not fertilize — excess nutrients can cause floppy, leggy growth.
- **Pruning:** Cut back to 6-12 inches each winter to encourage dense, vigorous new growth and abundant berries.
- **Cold tolerance:** Deciduous and highly cold hardy, even during extreme freezes.

Beautyberry can be used as a specimen shrub, in informal groupings, or in naturalized and cottage-style gardens, King said. It tolerates full sun to partial shade, and is relatively drought tolerant, though plants in sunnier spots may need more water. Plants tend to wilt early during dry spells but bounce back well when watered.

King recommends cutting the shrub back to 6-12 inches each winter to encourage compact, vigorous new growth. He also said to avoid fertilizing American beautyberry because it can result in floppy, leggy growth.

Beyond its ornamental and ecological value, American beautyberry has a history of practical uses, King said. Native Americans and farmers once used

its leaves as an insect repellent, and modern studies have confirmed compounds in the foliage can deter mosquitoes and other pests.

Native shrub is a true Texas Superstar

American beautyberry checks every box for a Texas Superstar: resilient, beautiful, wildlife-friendly, pollinator-friendly and low maintenance, King said.

"It's a plant that really does it all," he said. "It's tough, it's adaptable and it provides beauty and ecological benefits. That's why it deserves to be a Texas Superstar."

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