

Plant Indicator Species for Swamp

The plants described below can often be used as field indicators for identifying this habitat when other physical and biological features of the habitat are present.

sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)

(fern)

- sterile fronds with pinna merely wavy-margined (not dissected like many other ferns)
- fertile fronds with tightly arranged, bead-like structures (green, turning brown) that persist through winter
- fiddleheads (in spring) are pale red



Photo copyright Henrietta Kress
<http://www.henriettesherbal.com>

marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*)

(fern)

- frond delicate, light-green, often with bluish axis (mainstem); minutely hairy



© John Hilty

tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*)

(sedge)

- root mass forms an elevated tussock from which new shoots emerge
- stems and leaves densely clustered
- occurs in many kinds of wetlands: swamp, marsh, wet meadow, fen



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swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*) (shrub)

- leaves egg-shaped, leathery, glossy
- leaves more densely clustered toward ends of twigs
- flowers white to pinkish, vase-shaped, very fragrant (June – September)
- flower tubes pinkish with sticky hairs



silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) (shrub)

- leaves opposite on twigs
- twigs reddish to purplish or green; older twigs with small white scars (lenticels)
- youngest twigs with silky grayish hairs
- pith brown (helps to distinguish from certain other shrubby dogwoods)

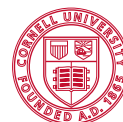


winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*) (shrub)

- twigs greenish, brownish, or gray, with tiny white scars
- leaf buds tiny, conical, at 45° angle to twig
- berries bright red, stemless or nearly so, persisting into winter



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highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)

(shrub)

- leaves pale green to bright green, dull or shiny, toothed or not
- twigs reddish or gray; often slightly shaggy
- flowers small and bell-shaped; white, pink, or reddish



Richard A. Howard,
courtesy Smithsonian Institution

buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

(shrub)

- leaves opposite or whorled
- flowers tiny, white, aggregated into 1 in diameter sphere
- sphere turns brown (and shrinks) and persists as “button” through winter



G.A. Cooper,
courtesy Smithsonian Institution

red maple (*Acer rubrum*)

(tree)

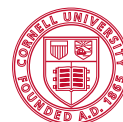
- leaves opposite (like other maples)
- leaf stems red; leaf undersides pale; leaf edges with ragged teeth
- bark gray and smooth when young; becoming platy when mature
- occurs in many kinds of wetland and upland habitats



WVU Herbarium, courtesy Smithsonian Institution



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green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanicum*) (tree)

- leaves opposite on twig
- leaves compound, with opposite leaflets
- bark gray, with shallow vertical grooves
- (consult technical manuals to distinguish this species from white ash or black ash)



swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) (tree)

- leaves with shallow, rounded lobes
- bark of mature trees dark gray, with irregular fissures, plates, and ridges
- acorns oblong with scaly grey caps



pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) (tree)

- leaves very deeply lobed
- each lobe sharply pointed, bristle-tipped
- branches horizontal or downturned from trunk



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