

## Buttonbush

# *Cephalanthus occidentalis* L.

**Group:** Dicot

**Family:** Rubiaceae  
(gardenia)

**Growth Habit:** Tree/  
shrub

**Duration:** Perennial

**U.S. Nativity:** Native,  
eastern and part of  
southwestern U.S.

**Natural Enemies**

**Attracted:** Medium  
numbers of [Chalcidoidea](#),  
[Empididae](#), and [Orius](#)  
[insidiosus](#). Small  
numbers of [Thomisidae](#)  
and [Dolichopodidae](#).

**Pests Attracted:** Medium numbers of lygus bugs. Small numbers of leafhoppers, thrips, Japanese beetles, aphids and leaf beetles.

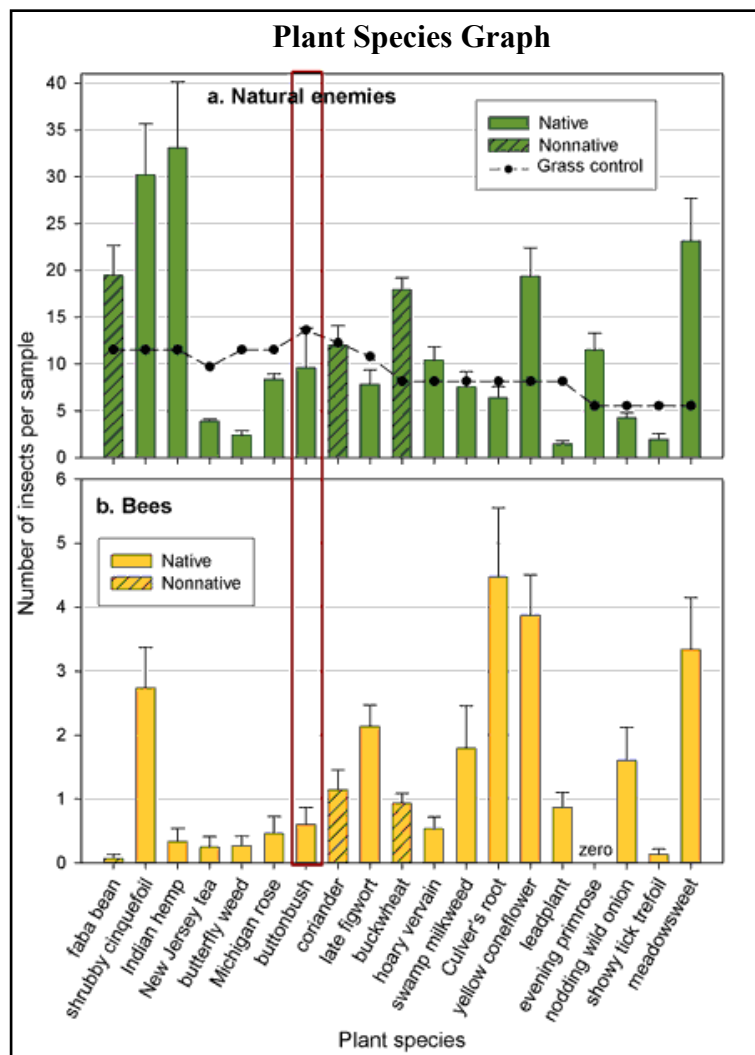
**Bees attracted:** Low numbers (less than 1 bee per meter square in a 30 second sample) of bees including sweat bees, digger bees, and bumble bees.



**Species Notes:** Flowers are round white balls about 2 inches across. This shrub reached 4 ft tall in field plantings, but grows 6-15 ft tall at maturity. Plants bloomed in the later half of July. This species was the ninth most attractive to natural enemies in the mid season, with similar numbers of natural enemies as in the grass control.

### About the Plant Species Graph:

Average number of beneficial insects collected at each plant species the week before, during, and after peak bloom, for plant species blooming from mid-August through early October (+ standard error). Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) boxed in red. Bars for natural enemies are in green, bars for bees are in yellow. Bars for native plants are solid and nonnative plants are striped. The black line on the top graph shows the number of natural enemies in grass with no flowering plants (grass control). Plants are listed in order of peak bloom.



**Habitat:** Includes full sun to partial sun, and average moisture to very wet soils. Naturally occurring in wet areas such as river margins, marsh edges, shores, wet thickets, and hardwood swamps. Often found growing in water or deep muck.

**Cultivation and Management:** Can be grown from seed (flowers in third or fourth year) or plug material (flowers in second or third year). This species is extremely tolerant of wet conditions, and will grow in standing water. Although this plant was not extremely attractive to beneficial insects, it is a shrub and as it matures and produces more flowers it may become more attractive.

**Availability:** Species is available as seed or plug material from various native plant nurseries. See the Michigan Native Plant Producers Association

**For more information:** View the online USDA-NRCS PLANTS database

