

## Bush Honeysuckle Identification Characters in New York State

Yellow cells have important characters

By Steve Young February 2024

Exotic Species (fields, woodlands, roadsides)	Mature Bark	Pith	Winter Buds	Mature Leaf Shape	Mature Leaf Width cm	Leaf Tip	Leaf Bottom Hairs	Flower Peduncle in mm	Upper Lip Notches	Flower Habit	Flower Color & odor	Fruit Color
<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i> (Winter)	Shaggy or peely	Solid and white	Long acute	Mostly wide elliptic and leathery	2.0-4.5	Acute with bristle tip	Glabrous to bristles on midrib	5-10	Shallow	Erect to pendant as leaves emerge	White in early spring, citrus	Orange or red, hidden
<i>Lonicera maackii</i> (Amur)	Distinctly ridged	Hollow	Long acute	Ovate to lance ovate	2.0-4.5	Acumin ate	Long hairs on the veins	<5mm	Shallow	Erect	White fading yellow, sweet	Bright red
<i>Lonicera morrowii</i> (Morrow's)	Shaggy or peely	Hollow	Short blunt	Oblong to narrow elliptic	1.5-2.5	Acute	Dense hairs all the way across	10 rarely 15	Deep	Erect	Mostly white, sometim es pink fading yellow, sweet	Orange to red
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i> (Tatarian)	Shaggy or peely	Hollow	Short blunt to acute	Ovate to oblong	1-2 (3)	Acute	No hairs	15-25	Deep	Erect	Mostly pink to red fading yellow, sweet	Yellow to orange to red
<i>Lonicera x bella</i> (Pretty)	Shaggy or peely	Hollow	Short blunt	Ovate to oblong to narrow elliptic	1.5-2.5	Obtuse to acute	On veins sometim es scattered between	10 rarely 15	Deep	Erect	Mostly pink fading yellow, sweet	Yellow to orange to red
<i>Lonicera xylosteum</i> (European fly)	Shaggy or peely	Hollow	Long acute to acumin ate	Narrow to wide elliptic to oblanceolate	1.0-4.0	Obtuse to acute	All the way across	10	Shallow	Erect	White fading yellow, sweet	Bright red

Native Species	Mature Bark	Pith	Winter Buds	Mature Leaf Shape	Mature Leaf Width cm	Leaf Tip	Leaf Bottom Hairs	Flower Peduncle in mm	Upper Lip Notches	Flower Habit	Flower Color & odor	Fruit Color
<i>Lonicera canadensis</i> (American fly - woods)	Shreddy plates	Solid	Very small, blunt	Ovate to elliptic	2.0-4.5 Petiole 5 mm	Acute	Glabrous or a few hairs	20-35	No notch	Pendant	Light yellow	Bright red
<i>Lonicera oblongifolia</i> (Swamp fly – fens/swamps)	Long narrow plates	Solid	Small acute to long acute	Oblong to oblanceolate	1.5-3.5 Petiole 2 mm	Acute	Downy all the way across	20-40	Shallow	Erect	Light yellow to white	Red
<i>Lonicera villosa</i> (Mountain fly - fens)	Shaggy or peely	Solid	Small acute to long acute	Long elliptic to obovate	0.7-2.0 Petiole 1-2 mm	Obtuse to rounded	Long sparse hairs all the way across	3-10	No notch	Pendant	Light yellow	Blue

## Links

*Lonicera fragrantissima* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#) - [iMap](#)

*Lonicera maackii* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#) - [iMap](#)

*Lonicera morrowii* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#) - [iMap](#)

*Lonicera tatarica* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#) - [iMap](#)

*Lonicera x bella* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#) - [iMap](#)

*Lonicera xylosteum* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#) - [iMap](#)

*Lonicera canadensis* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#)

*Lonicera oblongifolia* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#)

*Lonicera villosa* [NYFA Atlas](#) - [iNaturalist](#)

### Key to Bush Honeysuckles

- 1a. Flowering in March and April when leaves emerging or new. Citrus fragrance. Leaves leathery, often with bristle tip *L. fragrantissima*
- 1b. Flowering in May and June with mature leaves. Sweet fragrance. Leaves not leathery and acute or obtuse apex.
  - 2a. Stems and branchlets with solid white pith. Woodlands, fens, and swamps (native species).
    - 3a. Pendant flowers with equal petals all around, underside of leaves glabrous or with sparse hairs.
      - 4a. Peduncles 3-10 mm, fruit blue, leaf width 0.7-2 cm, petiole 1-2 mm, fens. *L. villosa*
      - 4b. Peduncles 20-35 mm, fruit red, leaf width 2.0-4.5 cm, petiole 5 mm, woodlands. *L. canadensis*
    - 3b. Erect flowers with upper and lower petals, underside of leaves velvety. *L. oblongifolia*
  - 2b. Stem and branchlets with hollow darker pith. Woodlands, roadsides, fields, and disturbed areas (non-natives)
    - 5a. Peduncles shorter than 5mm, leaf apex abruptly acuminate. Young flowers white. *L. maackii*
    - 5b. Peduncles 5-25 mm, leaf apexes obtuse to acute. Young flowers white to pink.
      - 6a. Leaves with hairs all the way across the bottom of leaf, peduncles 10-15 mm.
        - 7a. Bottom hairs dense all the way across, young flowers mostly white.
          - 8a. Winter buds short, blunt. Flower upper lip with deep sinuses. *L. morrowii*
          - 8b. Winter buds long acuminate. Flower upper lip with shallow sinuses. *L. xylosteum*
        - 7b. Bottom hairs very scattered or absent between veins, flowers mostly pink. *L. x bella*
      - 6b. Leaves glabrous on the bottom, peduncles 15-25 mm. *L. tatarica*