



Common name: **Mountain Laurel**

Genus Species: ***Kalmia latifolia***



Photo credit: Maurice Weitman, mohonkpreserve.org

Description: The broadleaf evergreen mountain laurel is usually a 12 to 20 foot many-stemmed shrub, but is occasionally taller and single-trunked. Mountain laurel is often stout and compact with spreading branches and a rounded crown. The pink or white flowers grow in large stunning clusters.

Habitats: Mountain laurel grows in partial shade in wet to dry woods and pastures, in cool meadows, and on slopes.

Phenology highlight: The beautiful and showy flower clusters as well as the individual almost-open buds delight the observer during just a few weeks each spring.

Species facts

- Bumblebees are the primary pollinators of the insect-pollinated mountain laurel flowers.
- Laurel sphinx moths lay their eggs on the mountain laurel.
- Mountain laurel wood has been used for tool handles and turnery, and the burls, or hard knot-like growths, for briar tobacco pipes.

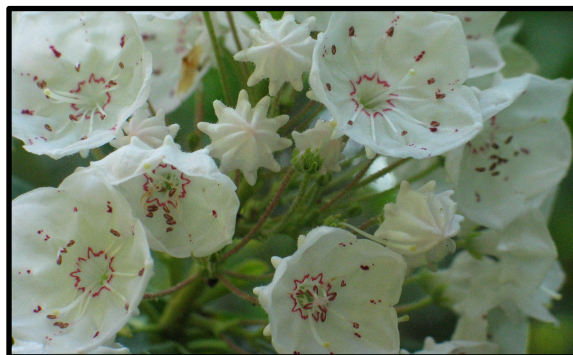
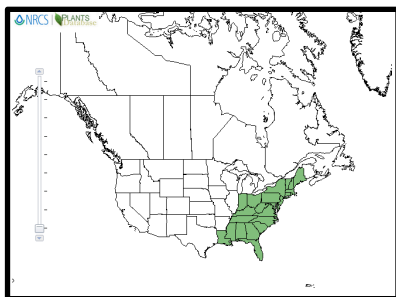


Photo credit: Ellen G. Denny, usanpn.org



Map credit: USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 01 October 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA

Why observe this species? Highbush blueberry is one of the plant species observed by New York Phenology Project member organizations. The mission of this public participation in science research initiative is to educate and engage the public while collecting data that is useful for detecting broad scale patterns in the natural world.

Tip for observing this species: For mountain laurel, there is a phenophase called "Young leaves" but not "Leaves." Once mountain laurel leaves become leathery and glossy, they are considered mature and are not part of any of the USA-NPN phenophases.

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenologyproject.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org).



Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)

Note: flower and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase for each; for example, if you record Y for "open flowers" you should also record Y for "flowers or flower buds."



Ellen G. Denny
usanpn.org

Breaking leaf buds One or more breaking leaf buds are visible on the plant. A leaf bud is "breaking" if a green leaf tip is visible at the end of the bud, but before the first leaf from the bud has unfolded to expose the leaf stalk (petiole).



Ellen G. Denny
usanpn.org

Young leaves One or more young unfolded leaves are visible. A leaf is "young" and "unfolded" once its full length has emerged and the leaf stalk is visible at its point of attachment to the stem, but before the leaf has turned darker green.



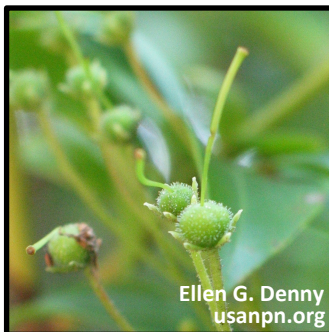
Ellen G. Denny
usanpn.org

Flowers or flower buds One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.



Ellen G. Denny
usanpn.org

Open flowers One or more open fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are "open" when reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between open flower parts. Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



Ellen G. Denny
usanpn.org

Fruits One or more fruits are visible on the plant. Mountain laurel fruit is a small capsule that changes from green to reddish to brown and splits open to expose the seeds. Do not include empty capsules.



Photo credit

Ripe fruits One or more ripe fruits are visible. Mountain laurel fruit is ripe when it has turned brown and split open to expose the seeds. Do not include empty capsules that have dropped all their seeds.



Photo credit

Recent fruit or seed drop One or more mature fruits or seeds have dropped or been removed from the plant since your last visit. Do not include immature fruits that dropped before ripening or empty fruits still on the plant.



Photo credit

Pollination: Mountain laurel pollen-containing structures (anthers) are held under tension which is suddenly released when a bee or other insect lands on the flower. If a flower remains unpollinated, the anther will self-release pollen onto the flower's own pistil.

All phenophases pictured here