



# BUTTONBUSH

*The Wetland Workhorse!*

## Environmental Message April 2026

**Did you know?** Native American tribes used buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) as a marker for safe and reliable water, as it often grew along creek edges, oxbows, and spring-fed pools. Even today, ecologists use buttonbush as a wetland indicator species in hydrological assessments. Its presence tells you a site likely qualifies as a wetland or riparian zone. It's mildly toxic in large amounts, but long ago it was used medicinally in small doses to treat everything from headaches to skin sores.

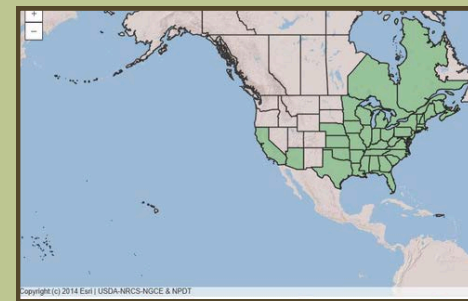


**Human & Wildlife Uses:** Buttonbush attracts a wide range of pollinators—including over 20 species of bees, plus butterflies, hummingbirds, and moths—by offering abundant nectar from its distinctive globe-shaped flowers. Its seeds are eaten by ducks and shorebirds, deer browse its foliage, and its dense structure provides nesting cover for wildlife. Buttonbush also helps reduce runoff, filter sediments, stabilize shorelines, and improve water clarity and nutrient balance downstream. This little plant does a lot of good!



**Compatibility:** Buttonbush grows in the very spots where mowing, re-seeding, or heavy equipment struggle. Typically reaching 6–12 feet, it is not suitable for electric wire zones, but it can be compatible in border zones where taller shrubs are allowed to grow. Its presence can actually improve site conditions by stabilizing soils and reducing erosion, turning low-lying problem areas into self-sustaining habitat patches. With proper placement and maintenance, buttonbush supports both operational reliability and ecological function.

### Distribution Map



### References / Works Cited

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