

Fetterbush

(*Lyonia lucida*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Also known as Fetterbush (a common name for many species in this genus), Shiny lyonia is a long-lived evergreen shrub that occurs naturally in lower scrub edges, scrubby flatwoods, xeric hammocks, moist pine flatwoods and forested wetlands. Flowers typically appear in spring and are attractive to butterflies and bees; fruits are eaten by birds and other wildlife. The foliage offers cover.

Shiny lyonia's flowers are urceolate, vary in color from whitish-pink to pink to deep rose, and are held by 5 light-green sepals. They are born in showy clusters and have a pleasant honey-like fragrance. The plant's bright green leaves are small, leathery and oval to broadly elliptic. They have a shiny upper surface, conspicuous midrib and are often spotted. A vein encircles the margin, which is a helpful identifier. Leaves are alternately arranged. Fruit is a small brown ovoid to urceolate capsule with very tiny seeds.

Its common descriptor "shiny" and its species epithet *lucida* refer to the shiny or bright leaf surface. The species epithet *lucida* is from the Latin *lucidus*, meaning "shining."

Family: Ericaceae (Heath family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida (vouchered in all counties except Suwanee and Monroe)

To see where natural populations of Fetterbush have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8A–10B

Soil: Well-drained, acidic soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 3–10'+ tall with 2–4' spread

Garden tips: Shiny lyonia's bright green foliage has a fresh appearance that is accented by its many bell-shaped blooms that vary in color from plant to plant. Use in masses or mixed with other shrubs and grasses from a flatwoods ecosystem for a naturalistic landscape. The plant can also be used in masses next to a swamp edge. It can be temporarily inundated or tolerate short drought periods once established.

Fetterbush is often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo



Pictured above left: Leaves showing spots and conspicuous midribs and margins. Above right: Fetterbush capsule. (Photos by Stacey Matrazzo)