

LAURALES

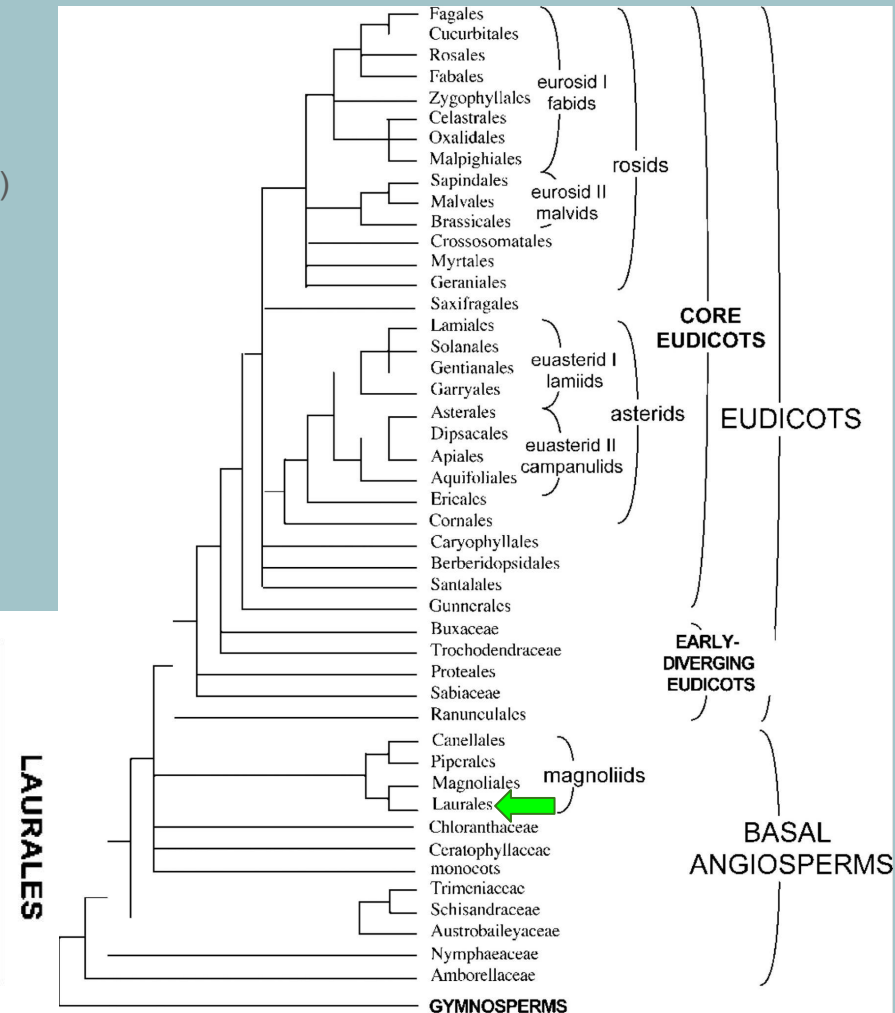
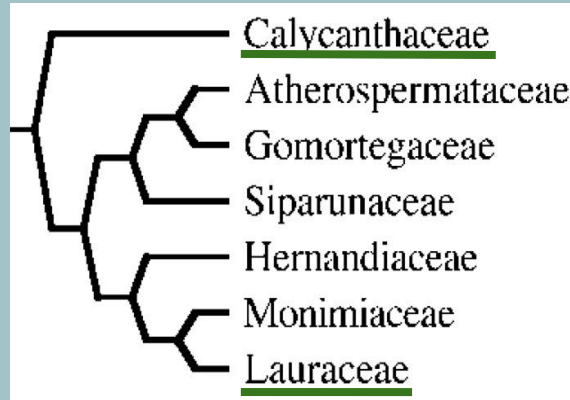
A close-up photograph of a California bay laurel branch. The branch is covered in dense, dark green, elongated, glossy leaves. Small, round, green fruits are visible among the foliage. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

- Laurel order of plants
- From Latin “laurus”
- Cinnamon, avocados, sassafras

Alan Vinzant

Taxonomy

- 7 families, 91 genera, and 2,500 - 2,800 species [1]
 - Compare to Asterales (28k spp.) Asparagales (36k spp.)
 - Lauraceae: 55 genera, 2,200 - 2,500 spp.
 - Monimiaceae: 28 genera, ~200 spp.
- Among the oldest flowering plants
 - Early Cretaceous, up to 127 mya [2]
- Contested inclusions: Amborellaceae, Trimeniaceae and Chloranthaceae [1]
- Current taxonomy based on molecular data [1]



Distribution and Abundance

- Mostly tropical and subtropical regions
- Representative species on all continents except Antarctica [3]



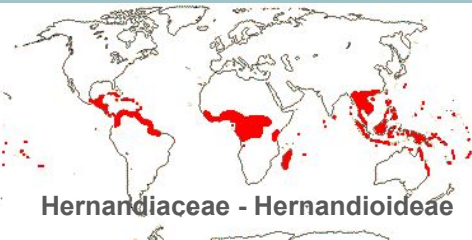
- One species: *Gomortega keule* [3]
- Maulino Forest, Chile
- Wildfire risk [4]



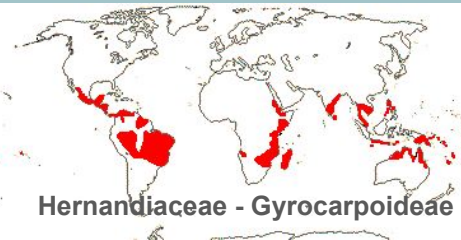
- 6 or 7 genera
- 16 species
- Australia (11), Tasmania (1), New Guinea (2), New Zealand (1), New Caledonia (1), and Chile (2) [3]



- 2 genera, 75 species
- *Glossocalyx* (4 spp.)
West Africa
- *Siparuna* (71 spp.)
Mexico
Central America
South America



- Hernandiaceae - 5 genera, 55 species [3]
- Worldwide tropical and subtropical distribution
- 3 genera
- Largest genus: *Hernandia* (22 spp.)

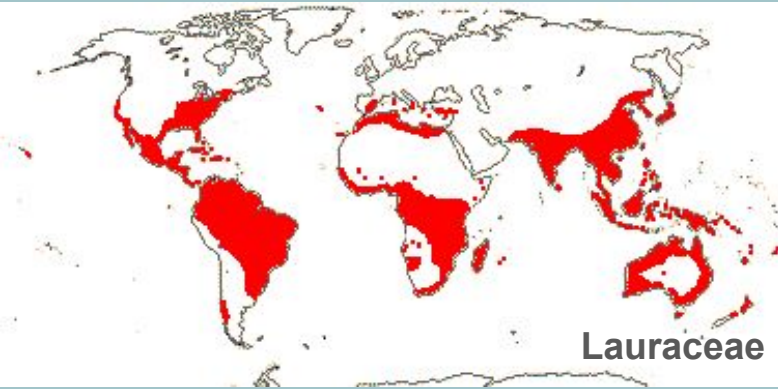


- 2 genera

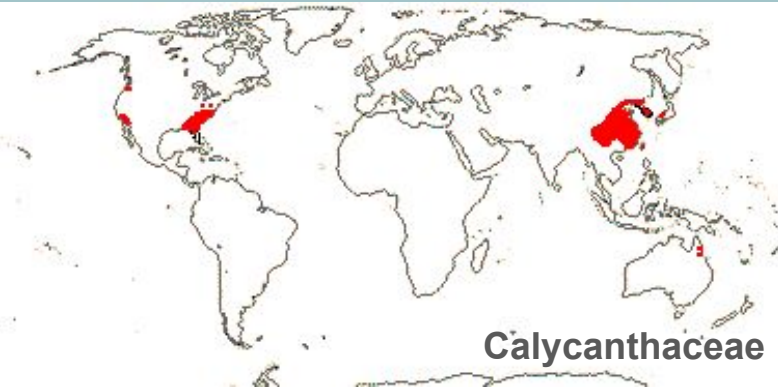


- 22 genera, 200 spp. (2nd largest)
- Mostly S. hemisphere
- New Guinea, Madagascar, Australia, neotropics
- Africa (1), S. Chile (1)

Distribution and Abundance



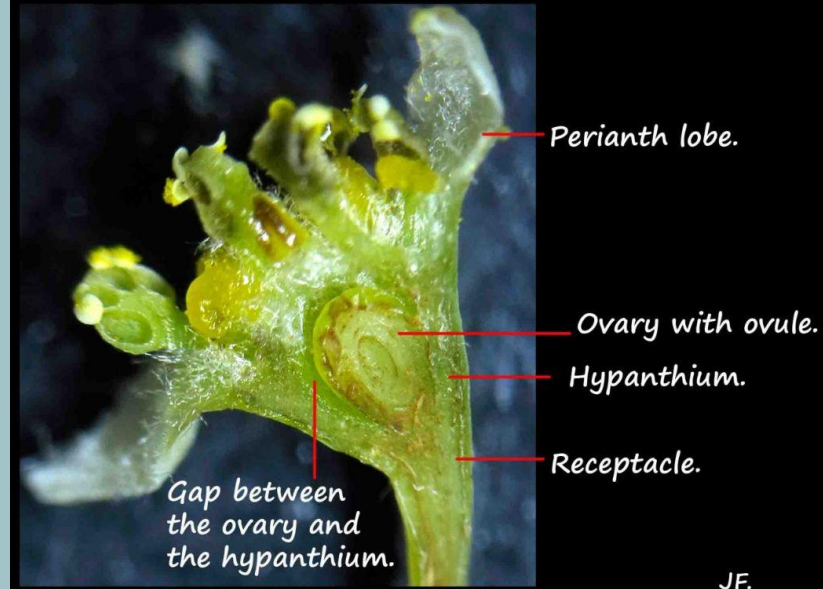
- California native: California bay: *Umbellularia californica* [5]
- 50 genera, up to 2,500 spp.
- Largest diversity in SE Asia, tropical America (esp. Brazil)
- Largest genus: *Ocotea*, 400 spp.
 - Tropical America, South Africa, Mascarene Islands [3]



- California native: Spicebush, *Calycanthus occidentalis* [6]
- 3 genera, 10 species
- *Calycanthus* (3)
 - California, southeastern US, China
- *Chimonanthus* (6)
 - China
- *Idiospermum* (1)
 - Australia [3]

Characteristics

- No single unifying characteristic
- Oddball genus: *Cassytha* [3]
 - Rootless parasite
 - Genetic information confirms inclusion in Laurales
- Woody
- Aromatic oils
- Perigynous or epigynous flowers
- Two or no aperture pollen



Above: Congenital fusion of all outer floral parts into a hypanthium,
<https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.3732/ajb.0800047>

Image from:
<https://www.botanybrisbane.com/plants/lauraceae/cinnamomum/cinnamomum-camphora/>

Left: *Cassytha filiformis* in SWFL on *Ceratiola ericoides*. Image author:
Bobyellow. Taken from Wikipedia

Non-Native Species in California



Lauraceae

- Avocado, *Persea americana*
- Mexico
- Important food crop



Lauraceae

- Sweet Bay, *Laurus nobilis*
- Mediterranean
- Culinary uses



Lauraceae

- Camphor Tree, *Cinnamomum camphora*
- Asia
- Camphor made from wood

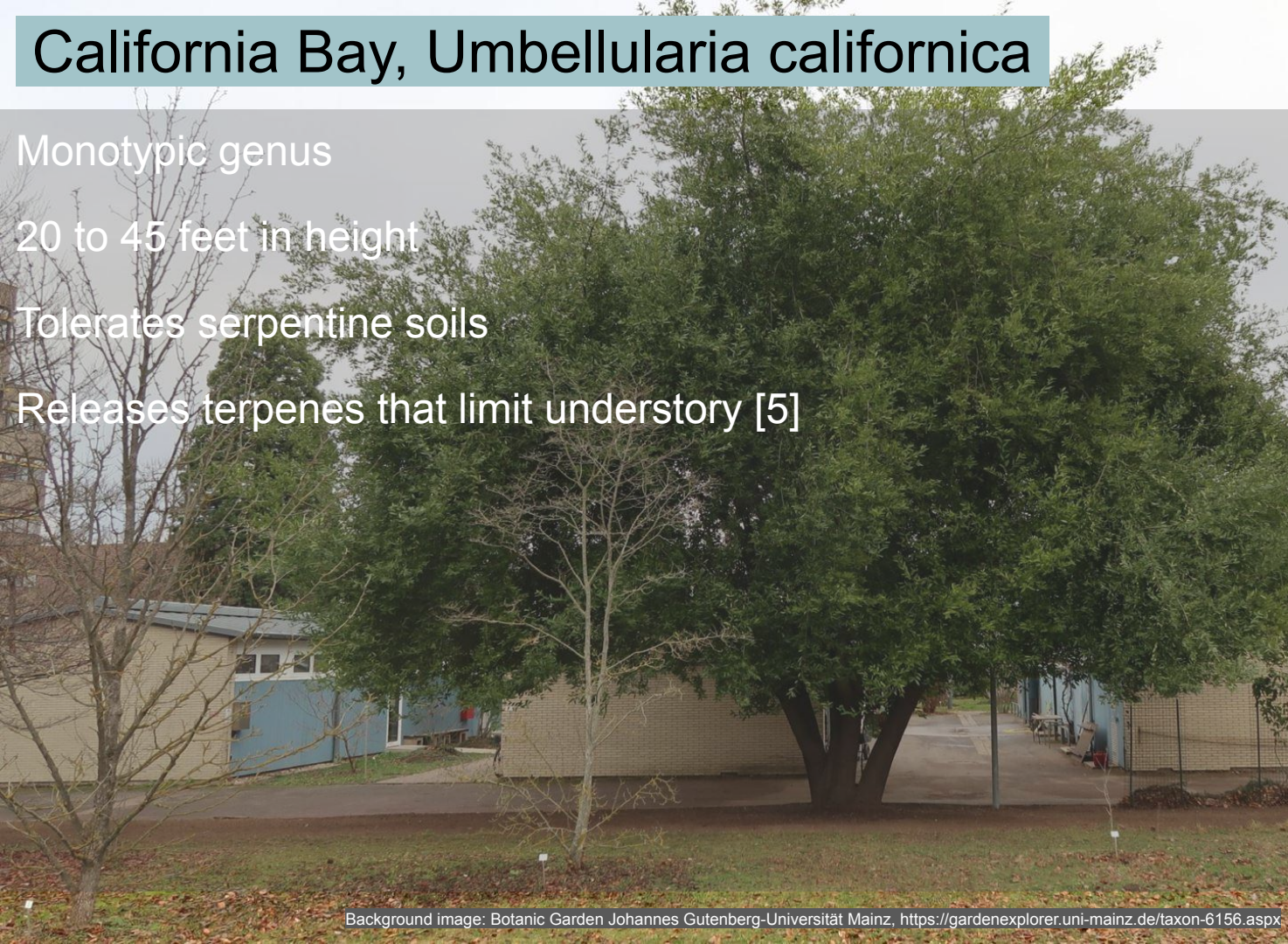
California Bay, *Umbellularia californica*

Monotypic genus

20 to 45 feet in height

Tolerates serpentine soils

Releases terpenes that limit understory [5]



Spicebush, *Calycanthus occidentalis*

Winter deciduous shrub

Camphor-like scent from bark

Wine like scent from flowers

Grows up to 13 feet tall [6]



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Works Cited

- [1] Renner, Susanne S (May 2011) Laurales. In: eLS. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd: Chichester.
DOI: 10.1002/9780470015902.a0003695.pub2
- [2] Pirani and Prado, "Laurales," Missouri Botanical Garden, 2015, <http://www.mobot.org/mobot/research/apweb/orders/lauralesweb.htm>.
- [3] Berry, P.E., Sampson, F.B. "Laurales." Encyclopedia Britannica, June 5, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/plant/Laurales>.
- [4] IUCN. 2022. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2022-2. <https://www.iucnredlist.org>. Accessed on 27 March 2025.
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- [6] Calflora: Information on California plants for education, research and conservation, with data contributed by public and private institutions and individuals. [web application]. 2025. The Calflora Database [a non-profit organization]. Available: <https://www.calflora.org/> (Accessed: 03/27/2025).