

Amorpha L. FALSE INDIGO

Amorpha californica Nutt. var. *californica*, FALSE INDIGO. Shrub, winter-deciduous, unarmed, with a somewhat open canopy, 100–350 cm tall; shoots puberulent with white hairs, covered with pricklelike and small blisterlike glands, strongly scented. **Stems:** cylindrical, initially 1.5 mm in diameter, green often turning reddish; bark brown. **Leaves:** helically alternate, odd-1-pinnately compound with 15–33 leaflets, 100–300 mm long, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to leaf base just below pulvinus, long-acuminate, 2–4.5 mm long, green turning dark red, typically abscising early; petiole 10–25 mm long, pulvinus barrel-shaped and ca. 3 mm long, above pulvinus with scattered glands; rachis channeled on upper side, white short-tomentose, with orange, pricklelike glandular hairs; stipels ascending at base of each petiolule 2, unequal, threadlike, to 2 mm long, the longer stipel purple-red, the shorter stipel often glandlike, \pm persistent; petiolules pulvinuslike, 1–2 mm long, green, with wrinkles; blades of leaflets elliptic or oblong to rounded or narrowly ovate, 10–25(–40) \times 4–20 mm, rounded at base, entire, obtuse to rounded or slightly notched at tip, pinnately veined with tip of midrib extending as a sessile gland, sparsely short-sericeous, dotted with evenly spaced, yellowish blisterlike glands aging darker. **Inflorescence:** raceme, terminal and densely flowered, 80–200 mm long, with 100–160+ flowers, bracteate; rachis angular with high ridges descending from pedicels; bractlet narrowly lanceolate or oblanceolate, 3–4.5 mm long, abscising after anthesis; pedicel 0.5–1.5 mm long, persistent with flower or fruit abscising from top. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, modified pealike (papilionaceous), width = spreading stamens, ca. 8 mm long, protogynous; **calyx** 5-lobed, 3.8–4.8 mm long, puberulent; tube bell-shaped, with blisterlike glands; lobes narrowly triangular, 1.8–2.1 mm long, green aging purplish red and dotted with raised, yellowish glands; **petals** 1 = banner, lacking claw; banner widely obovate but with margins arched down and embracing stamens and style, 4–6 mm long, burgundy (deep reddish purple) above midpoint with darker radiating veins and pale greenish white below midpoint; **stamens** 10, monadelphous (10 fused but barely so as a short tube), exserted; free portions of filaments unequal, 4–8 mm long, pale greenish white or white; anthers versatile-dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.8–1 mm long, orange-yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen orange-yellow; **pistil** 1, \leq stamen length; ovary superior, \pm fusiform, green, sericeous above midpoint, 1-chambered with 2 ovules attached to upper side; style exserted, curved to hooked, burgundy, sericeous but glabrous on terminal 1/4; stigma small-capitate. **Fruit:** pod (legume), dry, indehiscent, typically 1-seeded, hemi-obovoid, 5–6 mm long, tannish, pubescent, gland-dotted, slightly cobblestonelike (minutely rugulose), with persistent style, filaments, and calyx (having reddish orange glandular dots). **Seed:** \pm ovoid compressed side-to-side, 3–3.5 mm long, dull brownish, conic at base, concave around hilum. Early May–late July.

Native. Shrub with a see-through canopy, occasionally found in southern oak woodland or on its sunny margin. *Amorpha californica* is fairly easily recognized as a legume with pinnately compound leaves, and it has blisterlike glands on the stems (as in *Rupertia physodes* and *Hoita macrostachya*), a feature useful for identification during winter dormancy. The glands also are abundant on leaflet blades, and appear as light dots when backlighted. Among papilionaceous legumes, the genus *Amorpha* is unusual in having the

corolla reduced to 1 petal (banner), and that the 10 staminal filaments do not form a column but instead are barely fused at their bases. In deeply shaded canyon bottoms sometimes the leaves of this species can superficially resemble *Robinia pseudoacacia*, but of course *Amorpha* still has the distinctive scent. Some authors alternatively treat this as a subspecies rather than a variety.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson