Smoketree

*Cotinus coggygria*

Look closely

*Cotinus coggygria* is commonly called *smoketree* because the hairy panicles look like clouds of smoke. These clusters are often mistaken for flowers, but if you look closely you will see numerous small, kidney-shaped fruits known as drupes, each containing a single seed. Small, yellowish green flowers bloom in May and June but often go unnoticed. They are not nearly as showy as the smoky panicles that persist from June to August.

The native range of the smoketree extends from southern Europe to central China. There is also a native American smoketree, *Cotinus obovatus*, originally found growing in the mountians of west-central Texas.
Did you know?

The smoketree is in the same family as cashews and poison ivy (Anacardiaceae). Smoketree panicles are safe to touch but use caution; the sap may cause irritation.

Another common name for the smokebush is the wig tree. What else does the smokebush look like to you?