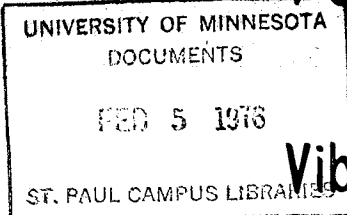


Arboretum Review



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Viburnums

Viburnums are a welcome addition to any garden planting. These come in a variety of forms and sizes, ranging from low, compact plants to tall, open shrubs. They are grown for their flowers, their summer and fall foliage, and for their colored fruits which often persist well into the winter. Those producing fruits are excellent for attracting birds. Most of the viburnums are tolerant to some shade. Many of the more than 100 species are lacking in hardiness for our area. These include the evergreen types and some grown for their fragrant flowers. Here is a list of the species, varieties, and cultivars tested and their performance in the arboretum:

Viburnum acerifolium (Mapleleaf Viburnum). This native of the northeastern United States and Canada is coarse-textured and offers little as a landscape shrub except for its ability to grow in dense shade. We have tried several times without success to start this species from seed.

Viburnum betulifolium (Birchleaf Viburnum). This native of central and western China may not be fully hardy. One plant, grown from seeds obtained from Wageningen, Holland, in 1962 and planted in our collection in 1966, has disappeared. It is not known whether it failed to start or if it died from some other cause.

Viburnum bracteatum. This Georgia native resembles our native arrow-wood, V. rafinesquianum. Plantings made in 1964 have made slow growth and have shown some winter dieback.

Viburnum burejaeticum (Manchurian Viburnum). This species, planted in 1960, has grown to be a large shrub 8 to 10 feet tall. The texture of the foliage is fine, and the summer color is a good green. The small flowers are in flat-topped clusters. In August, the fruits turn from red to bluish-black.

Viburnum x burkwoodi (Burkwood Viburnum). This hybrid between V. carlesii and V. utile has about the same hardiness as does V. carlesii, but it is more vigorous. Winter injury varies from none to severe. Plants started in 1959 are now about 6 feet tall. This is the most promising of the fragrant-flowered viburnums.

Viburnum x carlcephalum (Fragrant Snowball). This is another V. carlesii hybrid (V. carlesii x V. macrocephalum). It is much more large and coarse than is V. carlesii. The flower clusters measure 5 inches across in late May. Occasionally, flowers will open late in the fall, and this increases the chance for winter injury. We have tried this several times, and it usually winter-kills after a few years of growth.

Viburnum carlesii (Korean Spice Viburnum). This is the most fragrant of all the viburnums. Unfortunately, it is not fully hardy. The flowers are pinkish-white; these open in mid-May. Plants at the arboretum show varying degrees of winter injury—from none to severe. Plants are comparatively short-lived under our conditions. They should be planted only in a protected site.

Viburnum cassinoides (Witherod). This attractive viburnum has small, elliptic leaves that turn red in the fall. The small, creamy-white, flowers are in flat-topped clusters. The fruits turn from green to red to black. This species has been quite hardy, with only occasional dieback. Plants started in 1961 are now about 9 feet tall.

Viburnum dentatum (Arrowwood). This hardy native of the eastern and southeastern United States is excellent for mass planting or for a hedge. The flowers are small, white, and are produced in flat-topped clusters. The ripe fruits are black. The fall color is a rusty red. Our plants have grown well and are now about 8 feet tall.

Viburnum dilatatum (Linden Viburnum). This native of eastern Asia is grown for its bright red fruits. A single plant, obtained from the National Arboretum in 1960, died in 1966. This species should be tried again.

Viburnum dilatatum hispidum. This variety, obtained from the National Arboretum in 1960, is now about 8 feet tall and 10 feet wide. The fruits on this variety are dark blue, which is surprising since the species is supposed to have bright red fruits. Winter injury has been slight to none. The leaves are smaller, but are otherwise similar to V. lantana.

Viburnum fragrans (Fragrant Viburnum). Wyman lists this species as V. farreri. One plant obtained from the National Arboretum in 1960 died after 5 years. During this time, it showed varying degrees of winter injury. This species, native to northern China, is probably not hardy enough for our climate.

Viburnum hupehense. This is another viburnum from central Asia. It shows varying degrees of winter injury and probably will not prove hardy in this area.

Viburnum lantana (Wayfaring Tree). This very hardy viburnum has coarse, leathery leaves that are covered with silvery hairs. It is one of the few viburnums that will grow on dry soils. The creamy-white flowers are produced in flat-topped clusters in May. These are followed by berries that change from green to red to black. The berries are readily eaten by birds. Our plants have grown 15 feet tall in about 12 years. This is an excellent border shrub. The following cultivars have been planted: 'Aureum,' 'Mohican,' and 'Rugosum.' They are all growing well.

Viburnum lentago (Nannyberry). This very large native viburnum can be grown either as a large shrub or as a small tree. The fall color is a good red or reddish-purple, and the black fruits are excellent for attracting birds. Our largest plants are at least 15 feet tall. This is a good shrub to use for a screen or at the back of a shrub border.

Viburnum lobophyllum. This native of China has not proven hardy in our tests.

Viburnum mongolicum (Mongolian Viburnum). This viburnum, obtained from the Morton Arboretum in 1958 as seed, has now grown to be a large shrub 12 feet tall and 12 feet wide. This could be a hybrid, since the species is not supposed to be more than 6 feet tall. The fruits on our plants are red, while those of the species are black. Another plant, from Sweden's Gothenburg Botanical Garden, is typical of the species.

Viburnum plicatum tomentosum (Doublefile Viburnum). This beautiful viburnum and its many cultivars are lacking in hardiness for our area. The cultivars 'Lanarth' and 'St. Keverne' survived for a few years, then died.

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Viburnum opulus (European Highbush Cranberry). This is the common Highbush Cranberry commonly sold by area nurseries. Early in the season, it's susceptible to aphids that curl its leaves. Nevertheless, it is a good ornamental that is attractive in bloom and in fruit. The bright red fruits persist well into winter or until eaten by birds. Our plants have grown to about 10 feet tall and show no signs of winter injury.

Viburnum opulus 'Aureum.' Our plants were obtained from the National Arboretum in 1960. The plants grew to about 12 feet tall. The yellow foliage color was not pronounced. The plants were removed from the arboretum in 1973.

Viburnum opulus 'Compactum.' This compact form of the Highbush Cranberry grows to about 7 feet tall. It flowers and fruits the same as does the species, but it is more compact. This is a good plant for areas having limited spaces.

Viburnum opulus 'Nanum.' This is a truly dwarf form of the European Highbush Cranberry. Its mature size is only about 18 inches tall. Specimen plants are dense and mound-shaped. It tolerates shade, but can be grown in full sunlight. This cultivar produces no flowers or fruits.

Viburnum opulus 'Notcutt.' Fruits are somewhat larger than are those of the species, but are otherwise quite similar.

Viburnum opulus 'Roseum.' This is the widely planted old-fashioned snowball. Its white or greenish-white flowers are sterile and form a round-headed cluster. The leaves are especially susceptible to aphid injury.

Viburnum prunifolia (Blackhaw). This native of the eastern United States is quite similar to our native nannyberry. An earlier attempt failed to establish this species. However, plantings were established in 1974, and it is too soon to say how well this species will do.

Viburnum pubescens (Downy Viburnum). This is similar to V. dentatum, but its leaves are covered with pubescence. The arboretum plants, started in 1960, are now about 6 feet tall and 6 feet wide.

Viburnum rafinesquianum. This native shrub resembles V. dentatum. The mature size is from 6 to 8 feet tall and is about as wide. One plant, native in the arboretum, is especially dense, with very short internodes.

Viburnum recognitum. This is still another species that resembles arrowwood, V. dentatum.

Viburnum rufidulum (Southern Blackhaw). This native of the southeastern United States resembles our native nannyberry, but is less hardy. Plants started in 1959 grew to 10 feet tall before they were moved in 1973 because of overcrowding. The species has been reestablished in a new location.

Viburnum sargentii (Sargent's Highbush Cranberry). This species was introduced from northeast Asia in 1892. It resembles V. opulus, but appears to be more resistant to aphids. The flower clusters are also larger, with showy, sterile ray flowers. The fruits are quite similar. The large shrub has grown to 12 to 15 feet tall. The variety calvescens has glabrous leaves, and flavum has yellow fruits. A cultivar, V. sargentii 'Onondaga,' selected for its maroon-tinged foliage, was obtained from the National Arboretum in 1972. The plants are now 6 feet tall. Our plants are similar to the species.

Viburnum sieboldi (Siebold Viburnum). This is an excellent shrub; it has dark green foliage that turns red in the fall. The flowers are creamy-white in flat clusters. The fruits turn from red to black on red fruiting pedicels. Winter injury varies from none to slight.

Viburnum trilobum (American Highbush Cranberry). This native is an excellent shrub for moist soil and light shade. It grows to about 12 feet tall. The fruits are used for juice and jellies, so numerous selections have been made based on fruiting characteristics. Several cultivars have been included in our trials. 'Andrews' and 'Wentworth' are large plants that are quite similar to the species. 'Compactum' is a compact plant that grows to 5 to 6 feet tall. Two strains of 'Compactum' are in the trade. One we obtained from the National Arboretum in 1960. The other was obtained from the Bailey Nurseries, Inc., in Newport. The Bailey strain has a fine red fall color and is far superior to the eastern strain.

Viburnum x 'Allegheny.' This cultivar was developed at the National Arboretum. It has leathery, green leaves that are pointed and quite rugose. Our plants, started in 1970, are now 5 feet tall and 5 feet wide. The plants show no winter injury. This is a most promising selection.

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