

Viburnums: Shrubs with Four Season Interest

Viburnums are some of the most attractive, versatile, adaptable shrubs for the home landscape. They can be used as hedges or screens as well as in mixed perennial/shrub borders, but they can also stand alone as specimen plants. They usually take the form of shrubs, but some species can become spectacular small ornamental trees. They range in size from the Dwarf American Cranberrybush at 2 feet tall by 2 feet wide, to the Wayfaring Tree at 12 feet tall and 10 feet wide.

Viburnums are plants with four seasons of interest. All Viburnums have profuse white to pink flowers in the spring. They have large, attractive and often highly textured leaves. Showy midsummer berries are an important food source for birds. Colorful red to purple leaves in the fall persist well into the winter, when Viburnums' dramatic branching structure is revealed and enhanced by a dusting of snow.

But the best feature of Viburnums is their adaptability. While they would prefer full sun and moderately watered, well-drained rich soils, they are not picky and most (unless otherwise noted in the table below) will grow very well in part shade in alkaline, clay soils. Diseases and pests rarely attack them. Their fibrous root system makes them very easy to transplant.

If you are searching for a good-looking hardy shrub or small tree for sun or partial shade, consider one of the many members of the Viburnum family.

Viburnums:

Name	Ht/Width Zone	Shape	Comments
Arrowood Viburnum <i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	6-8 ft/ 6-8 ft zone 2	Rounded	Multi-stem dense, round shrub with narrow arching branches.
Wayfaring Tree <i>Viburnum lantana</i>	10-12 ft/8-10 ft zone 3	Upright rounded	Can be shrub or small tree. Great blue-green leathery foliage. Burgundy red fall color.
Mohican viburnum <i>Viburnum lantana</i> 'Mohican'	8-9 ft/ 8-9 ft zone 3	Rounded	Variety of <i>V. lantana</i> selected for it's more compact form.
Nannyberry Viburnum <i>Viburnum lentago</i>	12-14 ft/ 8-12 ft zone 2	Upright rounded	Glossy green foliage turns brilliant orange red in fall. Can be shrub or small tree.
Compact European Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Compactum'	4-5ft / 5-6 ft zone 3	Rounded	Light green foliage turns purplish red in fall. Great small shrub for mass plantings and seasonal interest
Dwarf European Cranberrybush	1-2 ft / 1-2 ft	Compact rounded	Extremely dense compact shrub.

<i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Nanum'	zone 3		
Allegheny Viburnum <i>Viburnum x</i> <i>rhytidophylloides</i> 'Allegheny'	8-10 ft/ 8-10 ft zone 4	Rounded	Wrinkled leaves have a nice texture.
Onondaga Viburnum <i>Viburnum sargentii</i> 'Onondaga'	6 ft/ 6 ft zone 3	Rounded	Foliage emerges a velvety maroon, maintaining a maroon tinge when mature. Pale purple flowers. Needs more moisture than other Viburnums.
American Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	10-12 ft/ 8-10 ft zone 2	Broad upright	'Wentworth' cultivar selected for profuse flowering and fruit with excellent flavor, ideal for preserves. Red fall color. Full sun.
Compact American Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum trilobum</i> 'Compactum'	4-5ft/ 4- 5 ft zone 2	Rounded	Light green grape-leaf shaped Foliage turns dark red in fall Dense shrub adds visual interest in winter.

Source: University of Illinois Extension