

Viburnums

*A garden without a viburnum is
akin to life without music and art.*

— Michael Dirr

Every garden needs a viburnum. Read these five reasons and see if you don't

Reason #1 **Viburnums are some of the most beautiful and versatile shrubs.**

They are:

- Very hardy.
- Demand little care.
- Are well adapted to conditions in the Kansas City area.
- Trouble free and have few pest or disease problems.

Reason #2 **There are many to choose from.**

- There are approximately 225 species of shrubs and small trees in the genus Viburnum.
- There is a viburnum suitable for almost any landscape purpose.
- Because their size ranges from 4 feet to almost 30 feet, viburnums can be used as specimen plants or combined with other flowering shrubs.
- They can be used as a hedge or screen, and they make wonderful additions to a naturalized area.

Reason #3 **Viburnums are truly multi-season plants.**

In spring and summer, they have beautiful flowers that cover the plant. Several varieties release the most wonderful spicy, sweet fragrance. And when the flowers fade, viburnums produce some of the most colorful berries in colors of yellow, orange, pink, red, blue, purple and black.

Reason #4 **Their foliage provides year round texture and color.**

- Leaves of viburnums range from shiny to dull, leathery to velvet-like and dark green to a soft gray-green.
- Some are evergreen. Most of the deciduous cultivars display brilliant fall colors that range from yellow-orange to deep burgundy.

Reason #5 **Viburnums are easy to grow and virtually maintenance free.**

- They prefer well-drained fertile soil, but do just fine in heavy clay soils and are very tolerant of alkaline soils.
- Most varieties grow in full sun and many will tolerate some shade.
- They require very little pruning when placed in areas appropriate for their mature size.
- They generally live 10 – 20 years in the average landscape.

There is one drawback to growing viburnums — they are addictive. No one can have only one viburnum! The following pages are a short list of some of the best viburnums for this area, but there are many more that will thrive in the Kansas City area. Viburnums are readily available at nurseries and garden centers, so go ahead — try one.

Size	Description
ALLEGHANY <i>V. x rhytidophylloides</i> 'Alleghany'	
Height: 8-10' Spread: 8-10'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark green, leathery foliage with semi-evergreen tendencies • Abundant white flowers in May followed by bright red to black fruits that birds love
ARROWWOOD <i>V. dentatum</i> 'Chicago Lustre'	
Height: 8-10' Spread: 8-10'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glossy, dark green foliage turning yellow, red or purplish in fall • Scentless flower clusters produced in late spring followed by striking blue-black fruit • Great shrub for attracting birds
BLACKHAW <i>V. prunifolium</i>	
Height: 12-15' Spread: 8-12'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creamy white flowers in May followed by numerous pink to black fruit in fall • Excellent fall color as leaves change from dark green to burgundy • Can be used as a small tree
BURKWOOD <i>V. x burkwoodii</i>	
Height: 8-10' Spread: 8-10'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow to medium growth rate • Flowers are pink in bud and open white in April or May • Very fragrant • Dark green leaves persist late in fall, sometimes semi-evergreen
DOUBLEFILE <i>V. plicatum</i> var. <i>tomentosum</i> 'Maresii,' 'Shasta,' Shoshoni,' 'Summer Snowflake' or 'Watanabe'	
Height: 3-5' to 8-10' Spread: 5-6' to 8-10'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional specimen plant • Horizontal branching pattern with large white, unscented flowers in May followed by red berries that turn black in fall • Excellent reddish-purple fall color
EMERALD TRIUMPH <i>V. x</i> 'Emerald Triumph'	
Height: 5-6' Spread: 5-6'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact with leathery glossy deep green foliage • White flowers in May followed by red berries changing to black in fall
ESKIMO <i>V. utile</i> 'Eskimo'	
Height: 4-5' Spread: 4-5'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwarf, dense plant with dark green semi-evergreen foliage • White 3" snowball blooms in late spring • Flowers are not fragrant
EUROPEAN CRANBERRYBUSH <i>V. opulus</i> (many varieties)	
Height: 8-10' Spread: 8-10'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White flower clusters in May followed by red persistent fruit • Leaves are glossy, bright green and maple-like • Good fall color • Excellent shrub for attracting birds
JUDDI <i>V. x</i> 'Juddi'	
Height: 6-8' Spread: 6-8'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very fragrant, spicy blooms in spring • Great reddish-wine fall color

Size	Description
KOREAN SPICE <i>V. carlesii</i>	
Height: 5-6' Spread: 4-6'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent plant of V. x 'Juddi' • Light pink buds open white in late spring • Stunning fragrance
LEATHERLEAF <i>V. rhytidophyllum</i>	
Height: 10-12' Spread: 10-12'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-evergreen with creamy flowers in spring • Tolerates heavy shade • Needs protection from winter winds
LINDEN <i>V. dilatatum</i> 'Erie'	
Height: 5-6' Spread: 6-10'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact rounded shrub with white flowers in spring • Produces abundant red fruits that turn coral and persist through the winter • Good yellow, orange and red fall foliage color
MOHAWK <i>V. x burkwoodii</i> 'Mohawk'	
Height: 6-8- Spread: 5-6'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the best viburnums • Red buds open to white spicy-sweet flowers • Lustrous, dark green foliage changes to vibrant orange-red to purple in fall
NANNYBERRY <i>V. lentago</i>	
Height: 15-20' Spread: 10-15'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very adaptable • White spring flowers followed by clusters of bluish-black fruit • Glossy, dark green foliage turns purplish-red in fall • Often suckers profusely • Ideal shrub for naturalizing
PRAGENSE <i>V. x pragense</i>	
Height: 6-10' Spread: 10-15'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely fast growing with glossy, dark green foliage that remains evergreen most of winter • Heavy spring bloomer • Very hardy
SARGENT <i>V. sargentii</i> 'Onondaga'	
Height: 6-8' Spread: 6-8'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New growth is dark maroon turning green as leaves mature • Red flower buds open to white flowers
SMOOTH WITHEROD <i>V. nudum</i> 'Winterthur'	
Height: 5-6' Spread: 5-6'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lustrous, dark green foliage turning red to purple in fall • White flowers in spring are followed by clusters of fruit that change from pink to red to blue then black

Size	Description
WAYFARINGTREE <i>V. lantana</i> 'Mohican'	
Height: 5-6' Spread: 5-6'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact upright growing shrub with leathery foliage • Prolific bloomer with heavy fruit set
WITHEROD <i>V. cassinoides</i>	
Height: 5-6' Spread: 5-6'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense shrub with spreading arching branches • Foliage emerges purple changing to dark green then orange-red, crimson, and purple in fall • Fruit changes from pink to red then blue and finally black • Flowers June-July

Works Cited

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