



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

“Always pee on company time...”

...was a favorite saying of an old Teamster friend of mine, now in his nineties and off the clock. We've used the expression “**okay**” for over 150 years since the campaign of Old Kinderhook himself Martin Van Buren. The next four years were anything but OK – the **Panic of 1837** followed his election. The graffitied doodle “Kilroy was here” appeared globally during World War II and was an unifying slogan for the Allied forces throughout the theaters of that war. He still makes an occasional appearance.

For my purpose here I, as many before me, borrow from one of the best – Will Rogers, corrupting perhaps his most famous line. When it comes to woody

ornamentals, I can honestly say -“I never met a VIBURNUM I didn't like!” With over 100 species it was *Viburnum lantana*, the Way-faring Tree (due to its ability to spread by root, layering, and seed), that first appeared in the writing of Vergil. Even Oetzi the Ice Man carried arrows made of viburnum stems (circa 3300 BC). Now of the Moschatels (Adoxaceae) the viburnum, or hoarwithy, belonged to the Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae, which translates as “leaves (that smell like a) male-goat or armpits (caper).” Dirr even refers to the leaves of *V. sieboldii* as giving off a “fetid” odor.



V. x rhytidophyllum 'Alleghany'

Despite this the genus viburnum has it all: species that tolerate shade (*V. carlesi* and its many hybrids, *plicatum* var. *tomentosum*, *trilobum*, et al.); that tolerate ephemeral floodplains (*V. lentago*); that are second-to-none in fragrance (*V. carlesi* and many of its hybrids); that provide great fall color; that offer both food and shelter for smaller birds; that are deciduous and semi-evergreen (*V. utile*, *rhytidophyllum*, and hybrids of same such as *x Burkwoodii*, *x Burkwoodii Mohawk*. *x pragense*, *x Alleghany* to name a few). This genus offers many species, cultivars, and hybrids that are more than hardy for our zone, but there are just as many that require more sheltered plantings or are simply not for our region.



V. plicatum tomentosum 'Mariesii'



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I started collecting viburnums but soon realized that I would run out of space very quickly and was disheartened by the list of can't-haves! Plan B focuses more on the tried-and-true basics. I can't believe I don't have *V. dentatum* 'Chicago Lustre' – great luster and fall color. Among my current favorites are any of the fragrant – *V. x Juddii*, *x carlcephalem*, *x Burk. Mohawk*, et al.



V. dentatum 'Chicago Lustre'

Just remember that there is room in every landscape for viburnum. And, if you want to learn more quickly, browse Michael A Dirr's **Viburnums**, lots of pictures and short descriptions. It's like a trip through ancestry.com – viburnum style!

I could go on forever.....but I'm off the clock!

JG - Viburnumophile