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## **Viburnum: The plant that keeps on giving**

**Delicate spring flowers, beautiful fall foliage and colorful winter berries**

RESTON, VA – For those gardeners looking for fall planting guidance, the National Wildlife Federation suggests planting viburnum, to make your yard enticing to local wildlife. Members of the honeysuckle family, viburnums are fast-growing plants that not only provide blossoms for pollinators in spring but also supply berries for birds and small mammals during winter. The fruit is eaten by deer, beaver, rabbit, chipmunks squirrels, grouse and most songbirds including the cardinal, cedar waxwings, robins and thrushes.

While European cranberry bush is one of the most popular species of viburnum, it is a nonnative species that can easily take over your yard. Fortunately, there are 15 native species of viburnum that you can plant instead. All of them flower in May or June, providing blooms for pollinators. Birds and small mammals will eat their berries in fall and winter. **Autumn is the ideal time to plant these versatile shrubs, since the cool weather will give them enough time to get established before spring growing season.**

Here are a few tips and suggestions from the National Wildlife Federation on planting virburnum in your garden this fall:

- American cranberry bush is an excellent alternative to the European cranberry bush. Its beauty as well as its adaptability to a wide range of growing conditions makes it an ideal native shrub for gardens. While its flowers are not as showy as the European variety, its berries persist long into winter, making it an important food source for animals.
- For eastern U.S. residents, try planting mapleleaf viburnum. A good choice for dry shade, this shrub's leaves are shaped like a maple leaf and provide beautiful fall color. The fruit is eaten by white-tailed deer, rabbits, ruffed grouse, ring-necked pheasants, wild turkey and many species of songbirds. The twigs, bark and leaves are eaten by deer, moose, rabbits and beaver.
- Nannyberry and arrowwood are two good choices for people living from southern New Brunswick to Virginia and as far west as Colorado. Well-suited to colder climates, these shrubs are attractive in flower and in fruit. The berries are readily eaten by birds and the

branches form protective cover for birds and small mammals.

- People who live in Southern states can cultivate blackhaw, which ranges naturally from Connecticut to Georgia and Alabama and west to Nebraska. Though adaptable to moist or dry soils, it needs more sun than most viburnums to produce abundant flowers and fruit.
- A good choice for gardeners who live even further south is rusty blackhaw. It prefers well-drained soils. If your garden is swampy, try witherod viburnum or possumhaw viburnum. Both are suited for soggy areas, and all three of these varieties have spectacular fall color.
- You can't go wrong planting these or any other varieties of native viburnum suitable to your region. Chances are their beauty and the wildlife they attract will provide you with hours of enjoyment.

NWF offers a variety of resources to help you garden for wildlife, including the 128-page *Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife*, full of beautiful color photographs and practical how-to information to make your yard a wildlife haven. The book, along with information on how to get your yard officially certified by NWF as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat, is available at [www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat](http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat). The book which sells for \$12.95 can also be ordered by calling 800-900-2656. For more about native viburnum, see [www.enature.com](http://www.enature.com).

*Protecting wildlife through education and action since 1936, the National Wildlife Federation is America's conservation organization creating solutions that balance the needs of people and wildlife now and for future generations.*