LANDSCAPING:
RECOMMENDED SHRUBS FOR WYOMING

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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

B-1108
August 2001

UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Glen Whipple, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

Growing woody plants in Wyoming can be a challenge, especially in areas of high elevation or low precipitation. In some locales in our state, both factors must be taken into consideration. Planning and thought must go into the purchase and planting of any type of plant, especially woody types.

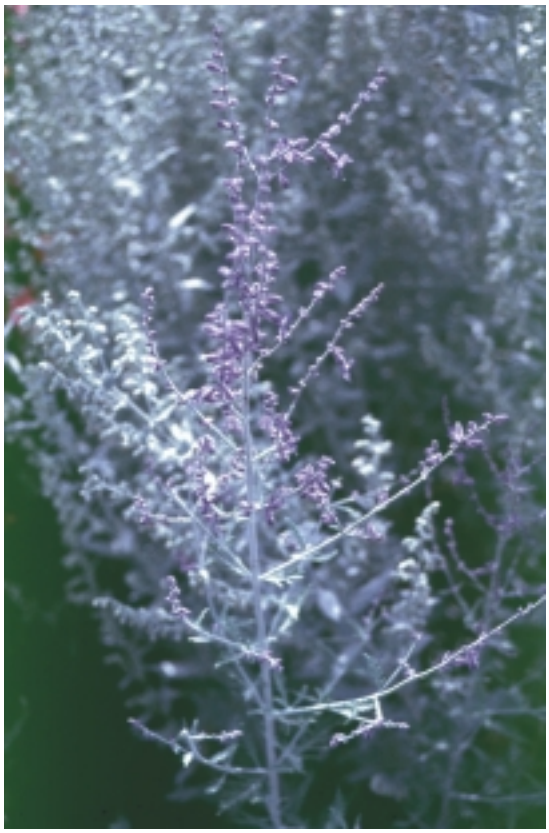
What is the difference between a tree and a shrub? Trees are woody plants, generally 8 feet or taller, that live for many years. They are characterized by having a single stem or trunk. Shrubs are also woody plants that live long lives, but they are generally smaller and have several stems originating from the base of the plant. They can range in height from less than 1 foot to 15 feet. Sometimes they are also called bushes.

Common sense and horticultural principles should both be followed when deciding which shrubs to plant. Some of those principles are discussed below. The climate cannot be changed, but the gardener *can* create micro-climates that enhance shrubs' potential for long-term survival.

Site selection

Proper placement of shrubs in the landscape is one of the most important factors affecting shrub survival in Wyoming. There are many placement considerations.

- ***Design of the landscape.*** Shrubs can perform many functions. These might include shade or screening from neighbors or streets. The landscape may be intended as a showcase for native plants. In any landscape, start with trees, as they are the dominant element. Then fill in with shrubs and other plants.
- ***Exposure to prevailing winds.*** In many places, winds blow from the west, southwest, or northwest most of the time. A shrub planted in an open area on the west or northwest side of a lot or a structure will be exposed to harsh, drying, and potentially damaging winds.
- ***Proximity to structures.*** Plant shrubs far enough away from a structure or building that branches will not scrape the sides. The shrub will need sufficient space to grow. Plant the shrub at a distance from the structure equal to at least half the shrub's mature diameter.
- ***Proximity to underground utility lines.*** Shrubs rarely cause problems under overhead power lines. However, it is wise to contact local authorities to determine if and exactly where buried



utility lines may be located. There is usually no charge for this service.

- ***Proximity to sidewalks, curbs, and driveways.*** Shrub roots can crack and damage concrete as the roots grow and develop. They can block sidewalks and driveways, making it difficult for pedestrians to pass. They can also impede drivers' vision at intersections. Often, local zoning regulations or tree ordinances will specify which species of shrubs or trees are allowed in certain places. Always consider the size the plant will be when full-grown. Plant shrubs at least as far away from sidewalks, curbs, and driveways as half the shrub's mature diameter.
- ***Proximity to other shrubs and trees.*** If a new, young shrub is planted too close to a mature shrub or tree, the new one may be shaded. Its growth may be abnormal or stunted because of a lack of sunlight.
- ***Exposure to sun.*** Make sure the shrub has enough sunlight hours to match its needs in its new home. Most shrubs have specific light requirements. Make sure to place the plant in the best light for the species. Also keep in mind the size of the shrub when it reaches maturity. Will it still receive enough light ten years from now?
- ***Proximity to water.*** Newly planted shrubs must be pampered to survive in Wyoming. A water source must be near during the growing season, and especially during the winter. Wyoming frequently has periods of warm, dry weather during the winter months. Additional water at these times is crucial to the plant's survival.
- ***Soil pH.*** Often, one of the more limiting factors in growing woody plants successfully in Wyoming is the high soil pH of grassland areas. Most shrubs will thrive in soils with a pH of 6 to 7. Many of our native soils, however, have higher pH levels. Select shrubs that will tolerate higher pH soils or more alkaline conditions. (For further information, check UW CES bulletin B-1097, "Iron Deficiency Chlorosis on Woody Landscape Plants in Wyoming.")
- ***Proximity to neighbors.*** When selecting a site, consider your human neighbors. Determine if the shrubs will block the neighbors' view, if they could be a possible hazard (thorns), or if they could be a nuisance (pollen, fruit, flowers, leaves). Check to see if the plants will affect neighbors' sidewalks, driveways, or curbs.

Purchasing healthy shrubs

Shrubs can be purchased in a variety of containers, or in no container at all. Each option has advantages and drawbacks.

- ***Bare-root shrubs.*** Often referred to as "whips," these very small shrubs may or may not have developed branches. Whips should be purchased very early in the season, before they come out of winter dormancy. The roots on bare-root stock should never dry out. If whips must be stored, keep them in a cool, moist spot with the roots wrapped in moist peat moss or other absorbent material.

  As soon as possible, pot whips in new or clean containers to allow the roots to develop. Later on in the growing season, potted plants can be planted in their new homes. Bare-root shrubs also can be planted directly into the ground. The cost of bare-root materials is low, but they may take several years to reach maturity.

- ***Containerized shrubs.*** Shrubs can typically be purchased in #1 (1 gallon), #2 (2 gallon), or #5 (5 gallon) containers. These shrubs will have well-developed root systems and will be more mature than bare-root plants. They also will cost more. One way to check the health of the plant is to gently remove the shrub from its container to check the root tips. If they are clean and white, chances are that the plant is a healthy one. Also, check for circling roots or plants that are root-bound. If the roots are circling around the container, or if there are too many roots present, choose another plant.

- ***Balled-and-burlapped (B&B) shrubs.*** Occasionally, shrubs can be purchased with the root system balled-and-burlapped. These will be the largest and most expensive shrubs available for purchase. Their root systems are contained in a relatively small "bag" that must be carefully handled. B&B shrubs must have their root systems intact, and the root ball should be in one piece, a characteristic called "ball integrity." If the root ball has been pierced, the soil has fallen away from it, or the ball integrity has not been maintained, the shrub's survival will be compromised.

Regardless of the option you choose, all shrubs purchased should have the following characteristics:

- Freedom from insects, diseases, and their associated damage
- Clean, clear color of the foliage typical for that particular shrub

  (Some shrubs have purple or red tinges to their foliage; others have a yellowish cast to them or have variegated leaves.)

- A minimum of broken or damaged branches
- No visible wounds or scars on the stems
- Healthy root systems that are well-established in the container or root ball

(Healthy roots are white and should be visible on the outside edges of the root ball.)

- Signs of new, healthy growth such as buds or mature green leaves

Site preparation

Site preparation is probably the most important part of shrub planting, but it is also the most difficult and often-overlooked step. Consider the landscape as a whole, select the proper site for the new plant, and then prepare the site.

Preferably, the hole for the new shrub should be dug before the plant is purchased or soon thereafter, especially if the plant is B&B. Dig the hole to the depth of the root ball or soil depth in the container. The shrub should be planted only as deeply as the original soil line, which will be a darkened area at the base of the stems. They should not be planted too deeply. The hole should be at least three times the width of the root ball. For bare-root shrubs, dig the hole at least twice as wide as the spread-out root system.

Planting the shrub

If the plant is bare-root, soak the roots in water for several hours before planting. When the site has been prepared, check the root system. Carefully prune out any small circling roots or any roots that have been damaged or broken. Next, spread the roots out horizontally in the prepared hole. Carefully fill in the hole. Make sure the roots are undamaged and that the shrub is placed straight and at the proper depth.

If the plant is in a container, carefully remove the shrub from the container either by gently pulling or by cutting the container away from the root ball. Always handle shrubs by the root ball, not the branches. Taking care not to break or disturb the root system, gently place the plant in the hole. Make sure the crown of the plant (where the branches and soil meet) is at or above the surrounding soil level. If the soil level needs to be raised, gently lift up the plant by the root ball, place additional soil underneath it, and then replace the plant.

If the shrub is B&B, place the plant gently in the hole, making sure it is not too deep. Carefully cut away the burlap and twine from the root ball. B&B shrubs may have wire baskets around the root balls instead of burlap and twine. Cut away as much of the wire basket as possible – preferably all of it.

Once the plant is set at the right level, the process of filling up the rest of the hole can begin. Make sure the shrub is straight before completely filling in the hole. Gently firm the soil periodically to fill in spaces under and around the root ball. Good contact between the soil and the root ball is essential. Roots cannot grow in pockets of air.

When the hole is filled all around the root ball, build a low "wall" around the perimeter of the hole, creating a bowl to hold water. The next critical step is watering the plant to settle the soil around the root ball and to provide water for the root system. It may be helpful to have water running while filling the hole around the plant.

A slow trickle of water over several hours is a good way to water the plant. Make sure, however, that the hose is moved periodically so all areas around the root ball are watered. A sprinkler is also effective in watering. Use a gentle sprinkle to water the shrub gradually over a few hours. Slow water applications will settle the soil around the root ball without compacting it.

Maintaining the young shrub

After planting, do not fertilize the new shrub. Shrubs rarely need to be staked. Also after planting, carefully prune off any dead or broken branches. The pruning cut should be made just outside the branch collar, and not flush with the larger branch. After removing dead or broken branches, further pruning should not be necessary during the first year.

Water the new shrub frequently during the growing season. The area around the roots should be moist but not waterlogged. In addition, the shrub's roots should not be allowed to dry out.

Winter watering is essential, especially for young shrubs, because Wyoming winters are unpredictable at best. Snow cover cannot be counted upon to provide consistent water during the winter. If the ground is frozen, watering is unnecessary because moisture cannot penetrate frozen soil. If the area is dry and there is no snow cover, however, it would be beneficial to get out the hose.

Guide to recommended shrubs for Wyoming

The following table lists shrubs that have been grown successfully in Wyoming. Hardiness and adaptability of woody plant species is closely associated with altitude. Each species is identified with a USDA hardiness zone, as well as a maximum elevation for growth. This table is not intended to be an all-inclusive list; consult your local nursery professional for other suitable shrubs for your area.

Evergreen shrubs

Scientific name	*Common name*	*Hardy to*	*USDA zone*	*Height*	*Width*	*Exposure*	*Comments*
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi	Kinnikinnick, bearberry	9,000'	2	1'	4'	Part shade	Native; excellent groundcover; prefers moist soil; light pink flowers in spring; berries late summer; broadleaf evergreen
Euonymus spp.	Euonymus, burning bush – many varieties, some dwarf	6,500'	5	2'-6'	2'-6'	Part shade, shade	Protect from winter wind and sun; excellent fall colors; broadleaf evergreen
Juniperus chinesis	Chinese juniper - many varieties, including pfitzers	7,000'	3	1'-12'	3'-8'	Sun	Foliage color varies from green to blue-green to gray-green; moist conditions; conifer
Juniperus communis	Common juniper	9,000'	3	5'	8'	Sun	Native; spreading juniper with open form; adaptable; handles poor soil well; conifer
Juniperus horizontalis	Creeping juniper - many varieties	7,000'	3	6"-2'	4'-8'	Sun, part shade	Many native; slow growing; good ground cover; very adaptable; conifer
Juniperus sabina	Savin juniper – many varieties, including tamarix	8,000'	3	6'	10'	Sun	One of the best junipers for Wyoming; tolerates alkaline soils; drought tolerant; conifer
Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon grape holly	6,500'	5	3'-6'	3'-5'	Part shade, shade	Attractive shrub with glossy green leaves; yellow flower; blue berries; can be chlorotic in high pH soils; keep moist in winter; broadleaf evergreen
Mahonia repens	Creeping Oregon grape holly	6,500'	4	1'	3'	Part shade, shade	Native; leaves red in fall; yellow spring flowers; blue berries; keep moist in winter; broadleaf evergreen
Pinus mugo	Mugo pine – many varieties, some dwarf	8,500'	2	3'-15'	6'-20'	Sun, part shade	Dark green needles; rounded form; tolerant of calcareous soils; conifer
Yucca glauca	Soapweed	8,500'	4	2'-3'	3'-4'	Sun	Tolerant of cold weather and dry, poor soils; flowers on a tall raceme with greenish-white blooms in late summer; swordlike, sharp leaves; broadleaf evergreen; can be invasive

Deciduous shrubs

Scientific name	*Common name*	*Hardy to*	*USDA zone*	*Height*	*Width*	*Exposure*	*Comments*
Amelanchier alnifolia	Serviceberry	8,000'	4	6'-10'	5'-8'	Sun, part shade	Edible bluish fruit; attractive foliage; open coarse growth; prefers moist soil
Aronia melanocarpa	Black chokeberry	8,500'	3	3'-5'	3'-5'	Sun, part shade	Reddish purple fall color; may sucker; blackish-purple fruit; adapts to range of conditions
Artemisia cana	Silver sage	8,000'	4	2'-5'	2'-3'	Sun	Attractive silver foliage; native; yellow flowers; drought tolerant
Berberis thunbergii	Barberry – many varieties, some dwarf	7,000'	4	3'-6'	4'-7'	Sun	Red and green leaf varieties; attractive berries; drought tolerant; good urban shrub; thorny
Buddleia alternifolia 'Argentea'	Silver Fountain butterfly bush - 1998 Plant Select® introduction	8,000'	4	12'-15'	10'-12'	Sun, part shade	Blue-gray foliage; lavender-violet flowers in spring; adapts to most soils
Caragana spp.	Peashrub – several species and varieties available, some dwarf	9,000'	2	3'-15'	6'-18'	Sun	Tall, vigorous growth; can be leggy; tolerate drought, cold, wind, alkaline soils; some thorny
Caryopteris x *clandonensis*	Blue mist spirea	8,000'	5	2'-3'	3'	Sun	Freezes to ground in winter; blue blossoms late summer; favorite of bees
Ceanothus spp.	Mountain sweet – several species and varieties available	7,500'	4	2'-3'	3'	Sun, part shade	Native; large leathery leaves; difficult to transplant; prefers dry soil
Ceratoides lanata (Krascheninnikovia lanata)	Winter fat	7,500'	4	1'-4'	2'-4'	Sun	Native; compact; silver foliage; hairy fruits; prefers sandy, dry soil
Cercocarpus ledifolius	Curl-leaf mountain mahogany	9,000'	3	6'-8'	6'-8'	Sun	Native; drought tolerant; dark green leaves curl under
Chrysothamnus nauseosus	Rabbitbrush – several varieties available, some dwarf	8,500'	3	2'-6'	2'-6'	Sun	Native; good summer foliage; yellow blossoms; interesting winter twigs; tolerates poor soils and dry conditions
Cornus sericea (stolonifera)	Redtwig and yellowtwig dogwood – several varieties available	9,000'	3	7'-9'	10'	Sun, part shade	Native; some varieties more compact; winter color; adaptable; prefer moist soil
Cotoneaster apiculatus	Cranberry cotoneaster	7,500'	4	3'-6'	3'-6'	Sun, part shade	Glossy foliage; leafs out early and retains foliage late; showy scarlet fruit; reddish fall color; adapts to alkaline soils; drought tolerant

Deciduous shrubs (continued)

Scientific name	*Common name*	*Hardy to*	*USDA zone*	*Height*	*Width*	*Exposure*	*Comments*
Cotoneaster horizontalis	Rock cotoneaster	7,500'	4	2'-3'	5'-8'	Sun, part shade	Spreading form; good for rock gardens; reddish-purple fall color; adapts to poor, dry soils
Cotoneaster lucidus (acutifolius)	Hedge or Peking cotoneaster	7,500'	3	8'	6'	Sun, part shade	Good for hedges; upright branches; orange-red fall color; pink flowers; black berries
Daphne x burkwoodii 'Carol Mackie'	Carol Mackie daphne - 1997 Plant Select® introduction	7,000'	4	2'-3'	4'	Sun, part shade	Fragrant pink flowers; adaptable; foliage edged with creamy white
Fendlera rupicola	Cliff fendler bush	7,000'	4	4'-6'	4'	Sun	Native; showy white flowers
Lonicera involucrata	Twinberry honeysuckle	10,000'	2	3'-6'	3'-6'	Part shade, shade	Native; good foliage; fruits in pairs
Lonicera korolkowii v. floribunda 'Blue Velvet'	Blue Velvet™ honeysuckle - 1999 Plant Select® introduction	9,000'	3	12'	8'	Sun, part shade	Blue-gray foliage; pink flowers; red berries; aphid resistant; from USDA station near Cheyenne, WY
Lonicera tatarica	Tatarian honeysuckle – several varieties available	9,000'	3	8'-10'	8'	Sun, part shade	Tall open shrub; rapid growing; fragrant blossoms; flower and fruit colors vary
Lonicera xylosteum	European fly honeysuckle – several varieties available, some dwarf	7,500'	4	3'-10'	3'-10'	Sun, part shade	Good as specimen plants or hedges; fragrant honeysuckle; adapts to many soil types
Perovskia atriplicifolia	Russian sage	7,500'	5	3'-6'	3'-6'	Sun	Blue flowers mid to late summer; drought tolerant; favorite of bees
Philadelphus coronarius	Sweet mockorange	7,500'	4	8'-10'	8'-10'	Sun, part shade	Fragrant white blossoms; open growth; adapts to poor soils
Philadelphus lewisii Cheyenne™	Cheyenne™ mockorange - 2001 Plant Select® introduction	8,000'	3	7'	6'	Sun, part shade	Selected at USDA station near Cheyenne, WY; drought tolerant; fragrant 2" white flowers
Philadelphus x *virginalis*	Mockorange – several varieties available	7,500'	4	7'-8'	4'-5'	Sun, part shade	Single or double flowers; less fragrant than above
Physocarpus opulifolius	Ninebark – several varieties available	9,000'	2	6'-8'	6'-8'	Sun, part shade	Coarse foliage; erect growth; good background shrub; handles dry, alkaline soils
Potentilla fruticosa	Cinquefoil – many varieties available	10,000'	2	1'-4'	2'-4'	Sun	Native; yellow or white flowers from June to frost; tolerates poor, dry soils and extreme cold
Prunus besseyi 'Pawnee Buttes'	Pawnee Buttes™ sand cherry - 2000 Plant Select® introduction	9,000'	3	15"-18"	4'-6'	Sun, part shade	Ground-covering form of native sand cherry; white flowers; black berries; adapt to wide range of soil conditions

Deciduous shrubs (continued)

Scientific name	*Common name*	*Hardy to*	*USDA zone*	*Height*	*Width*	*Exposure*	*Comments*
Prunus besseyi	Western sand cherry	9,000'	2	4'-6'	4'	Sun	Glossy foliage; edible fruit; tolerates hot, dry conditions; needs well-drained soils
Prunus glandulosa	Flowering almond	6,000'	4	5'	5'	Sun, part shade	Flowers pink or white, single or double; can be spindly; often chlorotic in alkaline soils
Prunus tomentosa	Nanking cherry	8,500'	3	8'-10'	10'	Sun	Attractive foliage; edible fruit; early pink flowers; reddish exfoliating bark
Prunus triloba	Double flowering plum	8,000'	2	10'-12'	6'-8'	Sun, part shade	Showy double, pink blossoms before leaves emerge; flowers often nipped by late frosts
Rhamnus frangula	Buckthorn – several varieties available	7,500'	3	10'-12'	10'	Sun, part shade	Large; coarse textured; adaptable; can spread easily and become a weed
Rhus glabra cismontana	Rocky Mountain sumac	10,000'	2	3'-6'	3'-8'	Sun	Native; showy fruits; leaves scarlet in fall; tolerates dry, poor soils; suckers can be a problem
Rhus trilobata	Three-leaf sumac	9,000'	3	6'-10'	6'-8'	Sun	Native; drought tolerant; red-orange fall foliage; yellow flowers; red berries
Rhus typhina	Staghorn sumac	8,500'	3	15'-20'	15'-20'	Sun	Large shrub; interesting stems in winter; red fruits in clusters; red fall foliage; drought tolerant; suckers
Ribes alpinum	Alpine currant	9,000'	2	3'-6'	3'-6'	Sun, part shade	Very hardy; good for high altitudes; scarlet fruits; one of first to leaf out in spring
Ribes aureum	Golden currant	10,000'	2	5'-6'	5'-6'	Sun, part shade	Showy yellow flowers;dark berries; good fall color
Ribes cereum	Wax or squaw currant	10,000'	2	2'-4'	2'-4'	Sun	Low growth; drought tolerant; good foliage; red fruits
Ribes uva-crispa 'Red Jacket' Comanche™	Comanche™ gooseberry - 2001 Plant Select® introduction	9,000'	3	3'	5'	Sun, part shade	Very hardy; thorny; red berries; moderate moisture
Rosa spp.	Roses – thousands of species and hybrids available	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Sun	Favorite garden shrubs; most require consistent maintenance; most not tolerant of poor, dry soils
Sambucus canadensis	Elderberry – several varieties available	8,000'	3	8'-10'	6'-8'	Sun	Showy tall shrub with edible fruits; coarse foliage; attracts birds; tolerates alkaline soils; suckers may be problem
Sambucus racemosa	Ews elderberry	7,500'	4	8'	6'	Part shade, shade	Native; showy fruits; suckers can be a problem; moist soil

Deciduous shrubs (continued)

Scientific name	*Common name*	*Hardy to*	*USDA zone*	*Height*	*Width*	*Exposure*	*Comments*
Shepherdia argentea	Buffaloberry	8,500'	2	8'-12'	8'	Sun	Silvery foliage; scarlet fruit; drought tolerant; thorny
Spirea x bumalda	Bumald spirea – several varieties available, some dwarf	7,500'	4	2'-3'	3'-5'	Sun	Sometimes chlorotic in alkaline soils; showy white to deep pink or red blossoms in summer
Spirea thunbergii	Thunberg spirea	7,500'	4	3'-5'	3'-5'	Sun	Chlorotic in alkaline soils; lacy foliage; white blossoms before leaves emerge
Spirea x vanhouttei	Vanhoutte spirea	8,000'	4	6'-8'	10'-12'	Sun, part shade	Chlorotic in alkaline soils; white blossoms after leaves emerge; good hedge plant; very tough
Symphoricarpos spp.	Snowberry – several species available	8,500'	4	3'-8'	3'-8'	Sun, part shade	Native; white berries; tends to sucker; tolerates poor soil
Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	Red coralberry	8,500'	4	3'-4'	4'-6'	Sun, part shade	Compact shrub; attractive foliage; red fruit; tolerates alkaline soils; suckers can be a problem
Syringa chinensis	Chinese lilac – several varieties available	8,000'	4	8'-10'	6'-8'	Sun, part shade	Smaller leaves than common lilac; does not sucker readily; blossoms not as showy
Syringa reticulata	Japanese tree lilac – several varieties available	8,000'	3	20'	15'	Sun, part shade	Good street shrub; very adaptable; showy flowers
Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac – many varieties and hybrids available	9,000'	3	8'-12'	6'-10'	Sun, part shade	Hardy; easy to grow; erect habit; sometimes leggy; fragrant flowers; very adaptable
Viburnum carlesii	Koreanspice viburnum – several varieties available	7,500'	4	4'-5'	5'	Sun, part shade	Fragrant pink blossoms in clusters; red fruit in fall; attracts birds; moderate moisture and well-drained soil
Viburnum lantana	Wayfaring tree viburnum	8,000'	3	8'-10'	8'-10'	Sun, part shade	Coarse foliage; open habit; tolerates calcareous and dry soils
Viburnum opulus	European cranberry viburnum – several varieties availabale, some dwarf	7,500'	3	8'-12'	10'-15'	Sun, part shade	Tall shrub; good foliage; white blossoms followed by clusters of brilliant red berries; adapts to alkaline soils
Viburnum x rhytido-phylloides 'Alleghany'	Alleghany viburnum - 1997 Plant Select® introduction	7,000'	4	6'-8'	6'-8'	Sun, part shade, shade	Widely adaptable; moist soils; white flower spring; red berries summer and fall

The Plant Select web site is: www.ext.colostate.edu/psel/index.html

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