



◆ Willowwood Journal ◆

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THE WILLOWWOOD FOUNDATION IS A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED TO NURTURE AN APPRECIATION FOR AND KNOWLEDGE OF BOTANY, HORTICULTURE AND THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH ITS SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE PUBLICATION OF, AND ACCESS TO, LITERATURE RELATING TO PLANT SCIENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES TO PROMOTE USE, ACCESS AND INFORMATION ABOUT NATIVE AND EXOTIC PLANTS.

1997 - 1998 Grants Are Announced

Four grants totaling \$12,500.00 were funded in the 1997 Grant Round of the Willowwood Foundation. The grants were selected from nine proposals received, with requests totaling \$38,500.00. The grant committee's decision was based on requests that have relevance to the mission of the Arboretum. While the committee would have liked to award more grants this year, funding was limited due to internal restructuring and subsequent expenses incurred in 1997-1998. Among the proposals funded were the following:

- * Morris County Parks Commission received \$4,000.00 to support an internship program to aid in grounds work and maintenance of the Willowwood Arboretum.
- * \$5,000.00 to the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia to collect and study Chinese Hem-

lock growing in Zhejiang, Fujian and Hunan provinces of China for resistance to Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestations.

- * \$1,000.00 to the Cora Hartshorn Arboretum and Bird Sanctuary, Short Hills, New Jersey to create a herbarium of the more than 80 indigenous wildflowers in their seventeen acre habitat, some of which

are endangered.

- * \$2,500.00 to the Morris County Parks Commission to fund repairs and improvements of the Willowwood Arboretum and Tubb's House.



The Foundation is

now receiving proposals for 1998-1999 grants. If anyone knows of an organization that is interested in applying for a grant, please call the office at (908) 234-1815 for an application. The deadline for applications is September 15, 1998.

Annual Lilac Party May 17th.

Continuing a tradition started in the days of Henry Tubbs, The Willowwood Foundation is planning the annual Lilac Party to benefit the Willowwood Foundation. Held just west of the stone barn where masses of beautiful and fragrant lilacs are in bloom, an open bar and hors d'oeuvres will be passed while guests have an opportunity to wander through the gardens. The University Club Chorus from New York City under the direction of John Baldwin will once again sing from their repertoire.

For those who attend, two different lilacs will be distributed. Both French hybrids, *Syringa vulgaris* 'Krasavitsa Moskv'y' has fragrant double blush blooms and *Syringa vulgaris* 'Président Grévy' has fragrant double blue blossoms.

The benefit will be held at the Willowwood Arboretum on Sunday May 17th from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. If you have not received an invitation and would like to attend, please call the office at (908) 234-1815 for more information.

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VIBURNUMS: SHRUBS OF DISTINCTION

by Fred Spicer

This is the first in a series of articles on shrubs and their maintenance.

To the savvy gardener, viburnums are a well-known and diverse group of flowering shrubs offering multiple seasons of ornamental interest with their flower, fruit and foliage displays. Nevertheless, they are sometimes misunderstood and avoided by many beginners. The problem is twofold. First, in a three-gallon nursery container, viburnums can look more open and asymmetrical than other, perhaps more familiar plants. Viburnums do not make cute garden center "miniatures" like spiraea and euonymus do. But after several seasons in the garden (or nursery field) their attractive growth habits are revealed nicely. Second, poorly-informed consumers purchase viburnums without being aware of their preferred size. The result is that they are planted in tight spaces and sheared mercilessly, like yew or holly. This muddles their naturally graceful shape and interferes with or eliminates

flower bud and fruit production. The potentially-converted viburnum owner is frustrated by a seemingly unkempt shrub which flowers and fruits poorly, if at all.

Thankfully, viburnum success is easy to achieve. Like so many other mistreated deciduous shrubs, viburnums want a bit of room in the garden, room in which to grow unhindered by the shears. They will be much more attractive and happier this way and so will you. It is good advice to observe mature examples of the selections you desire prior to planting them out as some selections can get quite large. The common doublefile viburnum (*Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum*) can easily exceed fifteen feet in width and ten feet in height. The deliciously fragrant Burkwood viburnum (*Viburnum x burkwoodii*) quickly reaches a height of twelve feet and a spread of eight feet. Both of these plants are splendid if you've got the room...troublesome if you don't. Even newer, com-

pact or "dwarf" selections are only smaller relative to the size of the species. There are, of course, exceptions such as the slow-growing dwarf European cranberry-bush (*Viburnum opulus* 'Nanum') which takes many years to reach a scant four feet in width.

Pruning of viburnums should be done with a light hand and is of two types. The first type would eliminate severely rubbing branches and dead wood; it can be done at any time. The second type is performed immediately after flowering (to minimize flower loss)

and the cuts are made at the very bottom of the plant, removing the oldest canes at ground level. This renewal pruning encourages the emergence of new stems from the base of the plant which will be more vigorous and floriferous than those removed. It also will effectively control the plant's size if done on a regular basis. Some experts recommend removal of as much as a third of the stems each year. In my opinion, this is a drastic measure useful for renovating an overmature, misshapen plant but an excessive procedure otherwise. Don't shear them as viburnums do not take kindly to this treatment. The ensuing growth will be unattractive and the plant's shape difficult to restore. Tree form viburnums, like the Siebold viburnum (*Viburnum sieboldii*),

**Annual Fall Symposium
September 12-13th. Ken Twombly on Viburnums at the Willowwood Arboretum**

Annual Lilac Party Held May 17th

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Those who cannot attend the party are invited to come enjoy Willowwood's wonderful Lilac collection that generally blooms from early May to late July, with the height of bloom around Mother's Day.

The collection includes not only some of the finest French hybrids ever developed but also later blooming hybrids

and species. Notable among the late blooming species is *Syringa pekinensis*, with beautiful exfoliating red bark, like a cherry. This specimen, west of the orchard path, was obtained from the Rochester Department of Parks in 1952.

Viburnums: Shrubs of Distinction by Fred Spicer continued

would not require this latter treatment.

Rhododendron fanciers - keen to develop an interest in another plant group - are often dismayed to find out that viburnums offer restricted flower color choices. White (or cream) is basically the rule although

the flowers of some selections pass through a bud stage featuring pink, or red in the case of the exquisite hybrid Mohawk viburnum (*Viburnum x burkwoodii* 'Mohawk'). But white is an extremely useful color in the garden, being invaluable

for blending other colors together or for cooling down compositions which are too hot. Viburnums excel in the mixed border, combining well with herbaceous plants and adding characteristics rhododendrons simply cannot compete with: fragrance,

fall color and fruit display. Not all are fragrant but those which are, are among the best available shrubs for this feature. A particular favorite is the Judd viburnum (*Viburnum x juddii*) whose pink-tinted flowers emit a strong scent favoring cloves and cinnamon. The fragrant viburnum (*Viburnum farreri*) is an aptly-named plant with an encouraging propensity to open its blossoms sporadically during warm spells throughout winter.

Viburnums, as a genus, are relatively free of major insect and disease problems. Their foliage is little troubled by pests with the exception of an occasional touch of non-fatal powdery mildew; the stems may suffer aphid attack. Foliage in season is typically green, often lustrous, sometimes heavily-textured. The Willowood viburnum (*Viburnum x rhytidophylloides* 'Willowood'), a hybrid developed by Henry Tubbs at the Willowood Arboretum, has large, very coarse-textured leaves which can remain evergreen and attractive through winter. Fall color on truly deciduous viburnums can be quite ex-

ceptional, especially on those hybrids and cultivars which have been selected for this trait. The Winterthur smooth withered (*Viburnum nudum* 'Winterthur') has outstanding deep red-purple, long-lasting fall color on its highly glossy leaves.

Viburnums form a large genus of species, cultivars and hybrids and they enjoy each other's company immensely. It is only in the presence of several relatives - the nearer the better, the more the merrier - that their fruiting potential is realized. At its best, this late summer and fall (rarely into winter) display is without equal. Fruit colors of yellow, orange, red, pink, blue and black are possible. Our native blackhaw viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*) has fruit which progresses from white to pink to rose to blue and finally to black. But plant variety and quantity are essential components for the cross-pollination to fully work its magic. Another factor is the presence, or rather the absence, of migratory songbirds, who eagerly strip the high-energy food on their way south. On the other

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(Viburnum 'mohawk')

Detach here

- Yes**, I am interested in information about the Willowood Foundation. Please send an application form and information.
- Yes**, I would like to support the work of the Willowood Foundation. Enclosed is my tax exempt donation of \$_____.
- Yes**, I would like information about volunteer opportunities at Willowood Arboretum.
- Yes**, I would like to receive future issues of this newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

Post Office _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Please complete the above and return this request to:

The Willowood Foundation, P.O. Box 218 Gladstone, NJ 07934.

Horticultural Volunteer Program

The Horticulture Volunteer Program is ready for its third season. The program is open to volunteers with all levels of gardening experience. It is a fun and interesting way to learn about horticulture from the ground up while developing gardening skills and techniques. Tools and equipment are provided and mini-workshops are held throughout the year. We encourage both men and women to join us. The Horticultural Volunteers are involved in a variety of other projects that include: an international seed exchange, (Index Seminum) plant propaga-

tion, label making, container gardening and contributing to *Garden Works*, the volunteers' newsletter. If you have three hours a week to give, you are certain to find the hands-on gardening experience fun, educational, friendly and rewarding. Share the joy of gardening. For information please contact, Kate Gutierrez at (973) 326-7600 or (908) 234-0992.

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hand, you might be content to allow the birds their repast, enjoy their visit and observe the fruit display, however fleeting, while you can.

In his popular book, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Michael Dirr says of viburnums, "A garden without a viburnum is akin to life without music and art." I can think of no finer tribute to this fine genus. Whether you're planting only one, or an entire collection, these first-rate performers will return countless garden pleasures. These viburnums and other choice selections will be available at the fall symposium.

~

*Mark Your Calendars,
Willowwood Arboretum*

is sponsoring a Fall Symposium on Viburnums and a plant sale of selected Viburnums on September 12-13th. Ken Twombly from Twombly Nursery, Monroe, CT. will be the guest lecturer.

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The Willowwood Foundation Sets Up Office

The Willowwood Foundation has opened an office in the Tubbs House. Kristen Krag was hired as the Administrative Director to oversee the daily projects of the Foundation. Office Hours are Monday - Wednesday 9:00-1:00 p.m. although feel free to leave a message at anytime and

we will get back to you. The office phone number is (908) 234-1815 and fax number is (908) 234-0767.

The Willowwood Foundation
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