**Description**

*General:* Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae).
Native shrubs 0.5-2 m high, rhizomatous and forming thickets; twigs pubescent. Leaves deciduous, ovate or orbicular, mostly deeply 3-lobed, 5-12 cm broad, coarsely toothed, lower surface minutely black-dotted, nearly glabrous to thinly pubescent with stellate hairs. Flowers white, bisexual, 4-6 mm wide, in upright, flat-topped clusters 4-7 cm wide. Fruit berry-like (drupes), 6-8 mm long, nearly black, with a single stone.

*Variation within the species:*
No varieties are currently formally recognized within *V. acerifolium* – previous named varieties within the species have described vaguely discernible and widely overlapping geographic trends of morphological variation.
- *V. acerifolium* var. *acerifolium*
- *V. acerifolium* var. *densiflorum* (Chapm.) McAtee
- *V. acerifolium* var. *glabrescens* Rehd.
- *V. acerifolium* var. *ovatum* (Rehd.) McAtee

*Distribution:* Widely distributed in eastern North America, New Brunswick (rare), Quebec, and Ontario south through Wisconsin, Illinois, and Arkansas to Florida and eastward into east Texas. For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

*Adaptation*
Maple-leaf viburnum occurs in upland forests, hillsides, and ravine slopes. It grows best in well-drained, moist soils and is tolerant of acid soils. It requires partial shading for optimum growth and development and occurs primarily in mid- to late-seral communities. It is a common understory species in beech-maple forests in the northeastern and midwestern United States; along the Gulf coastal plain, it is found in rich deciduous woods, often with white oak. Flowering May-August; fruiting July-October.

*Establishment*
Maple-leaf viburnum begins seed production at about 2 years of age and produces abundant fruit every year. Most seeds have an impermeable seedcoat and embryo dormancy that requires a warm-cold stratification sequence to be broken. Vegetative reproduction through rhizomes is extensive.
Management

Low- to moderate-severity fires top-kill maple-leaf viburnum. It apparently survives fire by sprouting from underground rhizomes, but these are shallow and easily damaged and the species decreases with exposure to repeated fires.

_Viburnum leaf beetle:_ The viburnum leaf beetle (_Pyrrhalta viburni_), native to Europe and Asia, was first encountered in North America in 1947, perhaps arriving earlier from Europe on nursery plants. It received little notice until 1978, when it caused severe defoliation of ornamental viburnums in Ontario and Quebec. It has now reached western New York and Maine and become a concern in urban landscapes and nurseries.

The adult and the larva “skeletonize” leaves by feeding on the leaves between the midrib and larger veins. Plants, which have been defoliated for 2-3 consecutive years, may be killed. The preferred host is _Viburnum opulus_ and its selections; lesser damage is caused to _V. lantana_ and _V. rafinesquianum_, _V. dentatum_, _V. acerifolium_, and _V. lentago_. Other species, particularly _V. rhytidophyllum_ and _V. carlesii_, are relatively unaffected.

The entire life cycle of the viburnum leaf beetle takes about 8-10 weeks. Larvae hatch in early May and feed on the viburnum leaves throughout the larval period, which lasts 4-5 weeks. The larvae pupate in the soil. The adults (4.5-6.5 mm long, brown) appear by mid-July and continue eating the leaves, then mate and lay overwintering eggs on the twigs. Egg-laying holes are in a straight line on the underside of the current season's growth.

Chemical control of the viburnum leaf beetle is best applied to young larvae, because adults will fly away or drop to the ground if disturbed. If over-wintering egg sites are found, affected wood should be pruned and destroyed before the eggs hatch. Examine upper and lower leaf surfaces for feeding larvae. Potential biological control mechanisms are being studied.

_Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)_

These plant materials are readily available from commercial sources. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under “United States Government.” The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading “Department of Agriculture.”

References


Donoghue, M. 1980. _Flowering times in Viburnum_. Arnoldia 40:2-22;


McAtee, W.L. 1956. _A review of the Nearctic Viburnum_. Published by the author, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.


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