Physocarpus opulifolius
Common or Eastern Ninebark

Found throughout much of the Mid-Atlantic,* this drought-tolerant, adaptable shrub grows in open woods, river and stream banks, and rock outcroppings. Ninebark provides seasonal interest with showy flowers, winter-persistent fruits, and papery bark, which molts in thin strips on older branches to expose reddish to light brown underlayers.

**Characteristics**

- Upright, oval, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub
- Ovate to rounded, lobed, dull green leaves
- Showy, domed flower clusters from May to July
- Red seed capsules dry to brown and remain all winter; transplants readily from seed
- Yellow to purple fall foliage (varies with cultivar)
- Graceful, arching branches with peeling bark

**Attributes**

- Tolerates clay soil, dry soil, rocky soil, drought, and erosion; no serious pests or diseases
- Deer rarely-to-seldom severely damage
- Mature branches display exfoliating bark in winter
- Easily grown, resilient; "...once established, requires a bulldozer for removal." (Dirr, 1997)
- Attracts numerous pollinators and birds

**Growing and Maintenance Tips**

- Soil Requirements: Average, well-drained
- Water Requirements: Dry, Moist
- Prune as needed directly after bloom; remove old canes of established plants at the base in late winter
- Use in beds, borders, or as a hedge or screen
- Hardiness: USDA Zones 2-7 (maybe 8)

**Excellent Replacement for**

- Berberis species - Barberry
- Ligustrum species - Privets
- Rhodotypos scandens - Jetbead
- Spiraea japonica - Japanese Spirea

*It is native to DC and MD and is historical in the DE Piedmont. It grows throughout the middle and southern parts of PA. In VA, it is frequent to common in the mountains, infrequent to locally common in the Piedmont, and rare in the Coastal Plains.

**Top left shrub and fall foliage is cultivar ‘Summer Wine.’

Images by Elaine Mills, U.S. National Arboretum, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, and Longwood Gardens

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