





Itea virginica
virginia Sweetspire, virginia-willow

Tried and True
tive Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Fragrant, showy four-inch spires of white blossoms fall from arching stems in late spring. In autumn, the leaves of Virginia Sweetspire turn a vibrant red to orange. This [native](#)* favorite has graceful open growth habit and performs best in partial shade with moist soil.



Shrub	Flowers, Mid-Spring Shrub, Fall Foliage, Fruit
Height: 6–10 feet	   
Spread: 4–6 feet	
Bloom Color: White	
Characteristics	
Upright, arching to rounded deciduous shrub	
Alternate , pinnate , finely toothed, 1–4” long, glabrous (above) leaves persist well into winter	
Tiny, star-shaped flowers in cylindrical, drooping clusters (racemes) cover the shrub May to June	
Fruit appears in June as green capsules turning to brown and persists into March	
Flaming fall color: orange, crimson, burgundy	
Suckers to form thickets	
Attributes	
Tolerates clay soil , wet soil, dense shade, and flooding to 6 inches; no serious pests or diseases; deer occasionally severely damage when favorite food sources are gone	
Green to red-purple twigs provide winter interest	
Attracts bees, butterflies, wasps, and birds; provides nesting habitat and cover for birds	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Humus-rich soil	Berberis thunbergii - Japanese Barberry
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	Buddleia davidii - Butterfly Bush
Water Requirements : Moist, Wet	Euonymus alatus - Burning Bush
More prolific flowers/colorful foliage w/ more sun	Spiraea japonica - Japanese Spiraea
Use in rain or woodland gardens, at fresh water’s edge, naturalized, or to control erosion	Syringa vulgaris - Lilac
Hardiness : USDA Zones 5–9	*It is native to DC and to NoVA (except for Loudoun County) and is rare in VA’s outer Piedmont. It is common in the Coastal Plains of DE, MD, and VA. It is extirpated in PA.
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden and by Elaine Mills (bottom), private garden, Arlington, VA