



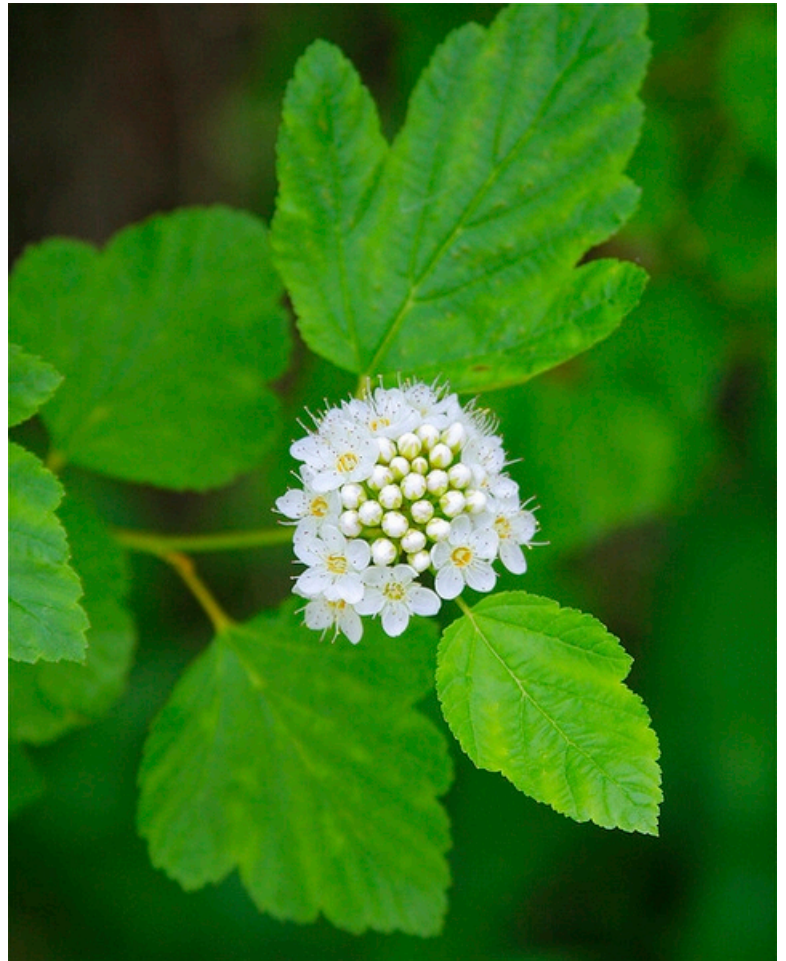
Ninebark

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Ninebark, *Physocarpus opulifolius*, is a deciduous native shrub that is a member of the Rosaceae family. This shrub provides year-round landscape interest. It has pink-white spiraea-like flowers in spring, foliage that turns yellow in fall, and provides a glimpse of its exfoliating bark in winter. The bark of this plant peels into thin papery strips, revealing layers of reddish-brown inner bark. This peeling is what gives the shrub its name.

Ninebarks tolerate many types of soils and can grow in full sun to part shade. They are drought tolerant, insect and disease resistant. Deer will browse newer growth if their preferred food sources are scarce.



There are few potential drawbacks to consider. Ninebarks are fast growing and can reach a height of ten feet. They may require annual pruning to remove dead growth and manage their shape. In addition, in hot humid climates, they can develop powdery mildew. This can be managed through pruning to provide better airflow and spacing plants out.



The ninebarks is an excellent native alternative to the Japanese spirea which has become highly invasive in several states. In addition, the plant provides several benefits to wildlife. Its flowers are a source of nectar for bees, butterflies, and certain beetles. Birds eat the drooping clusters of reddish seeds, and the shrub provides cover for small mammals and birds. Some natives (cultivars of native plants) of this shrub were bred to produce purple and lime-green colored leaves, but it is not clear that they provide the same food source benefits for insects and birds as the straight native species does.



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