



viburnum



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Viburnum opulus
Snowball, guelder rose, cramp bark, cranberry bush, European cranberry bush

BOTANICAL NAME

Viburnum opulus (vy-BUR-num OP-ewe-lus)

COMMON NAMES

Snowball, guelder rose, cramp bark, cranberry bush, European cranberry bush; no relation to the edible cranberry (*Vaccinium*)

DESCRIPTION

Viburnum opulus is one of roughly 150 species of deciduous evergreen shrubs and small trees in this genus, most of which are known as landscape plants. This species' small, tubular white blooms grow in dense clusters up to 4 inches in diameter on leafy stems. The spherical mounds garner this species the common name of "snowball." *Viburnum* blooms have a sweet fragrance. In fall, some varieties develop clusters of shiny red berries. Some growers sell these

berry-covered stems for fall arrangements.

COLORS

Viburnums are mostly available in greenish white, with the green blossoms becoming a creamy white as they mature. The variety 'Pink Sensation' has a light pink hue.

VASE LIFE

Properly treated and sold within a day or two of arrival in the store, *Viburnum* flowers can last from five to seven days for customers.

AVAILABILITY

Viburnums are available from February through May—with supplies greatest in April and May—from California growers and other specialty growers throughout the country. Holland growers' production runs from January through May.

vase-life extenders

PROCESSING Immediately upon their arrival, unpack *Viburnums*; remove any bunch bindings and sleeves; and recut the woody stems, removing at least 1 inch of stem. Do not mash or smash the stem ends; doing so damages the vascular system and inhibits the stems' water uptake. Dip or place the stems into a hydration solution, and then place them into clean containers partially filled with properly prepared flower-food solution.

REFRIGERATION Store *Viburnums* in a floral cooler at 34 F to 38 F. The flowers can be

held longer, up to seven days, at 30 F to 32 F but will lose their fragrance.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Viburnums*' ethylene sensitivity is low.

WATER Check the water level daily, and add warm flower-food solution as needed. Recut the stems every two or three days to ensure effective water uptake.



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Some information provided by:
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fun facts

WHAT'S IN A NAME The species name "*opulus*" is from the Latin "*opulentus*," which means "splendid" or "sumptuous," for the blooms' appearance.

FAMILY *Viburnums* are members of the *Caprifoliaceae* (honeysuckle) family. Close relatives include snowberry (*Symphoricarpos*), elderberry (*Sambucus*) and *Weigela*.

HOME SWEET HOME *Viburnums* are native to Europe, North Africa, and northern and western Asia.

WEDDING BELLS The fragrant creamy white blooms, with their brief season, are a favorite for wedding and high-end floral design.

BREATHE EASY *Viburnum opulus* is considered an allergy-safe pollen-producing plant by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

MEDICINAL USE As a homeopathic remedy, *V. opulus* is used to treat obstinate hiccups; vertigo; eye soreness; head- neck- and back-aches; as well as menstrual cramps, morning sickness and false labor pains. It is also believed to prevent miscarriage. **str**

Reach "Cut Flower of the Month" writer Amy Bauer at abauer@superfloralretailing.com.

quality checklist

WHEN TO BUY Growers vary in the stage at which they harvest *Viburnum* stems. Buy the blooms when they are still light green to greenish-white for longer life in the store. If purchasing for immediate use, such as in a wedding or event, look for blooms that have matured to their full creamy white hue.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Seek out sturdy stems with no signs of rot or mildew. Some growers strip the leaves, but if leaves are present, avoid bunches with yellowed or bruised leaves.