



L to r, white flowered Viburnum X 'Lord Byron' by Paul Cox, *V. cinnamomifolium*'s creamy flowers on reddish stalks, red-fruited *V. propinquum* and *V. Henryii*.

## VIBURNUMS

*by Dave Creech*

When folks gather to talk about best small shrubs or small trees for the landscape of the Gulf South, Viburnums don't often make the list.

That may be changing.

With so many choices, old and new, there's a strong foundation to justify resurgence in interest. Think about it. Viburnums are typically Texas durable and once in the ground a few years, pretty much bullet proof. They rarely need pampering. Whether heat and drought, flood or cold, most don't miss a beat. There's great diversity in the genus.

From evergreen to deciduous, with form that ranges from a small shrub to significant mid-sized trees. I lean to natives, it's true. The tried and true Rusty Blackhaw, Arrowwood, Smooth Witherod, or Small Viburnum. These are rarely affected by insects or diseases. They're not a major deer browse.

We love the hybrids 'Lord Byron' and 'Sir Robert', Paul Cox introductions that are the result of a cross between Rusty Blackhaw and Small Viburnum.



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In the exotic world, there's too much to like. If you like huge flowers, try a Chinese snowball with white soccer ball sized blooms. That may be a bit exaggerated, but put one in a full sun well drained spot and you'll have a point of interest at least one time per year.

Chinese snowball is mophead hydrangea on steroids. For all around interest, you can't go wrong with *Viburnum luzonicum*, a long ago Lynn Lowrey exotic introduction with great fall color, interesting berries, and a neat habit. This is one tough plant. You kill a *V. luzonicum*; you need to change hobbies.

Then there's an exciting new army of Asian Viburnums just now surfacing as great landscape plants for the South. *V. cinnamomifolium*, *V. propinquum*, *V. henryi*, and others are making their mark.