



## ***Physocarpus opulifolius* - Ninebark**

COMMON NAME: Common Ninebark, also Prairie Ninebark

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Physocarpus opulifolius* (*Physo* comes from Greek for bellows – swollen or inflated; *carpus* is Greek for fruit; *opulo* is Latin for wealth or profusion; *folius* is Latin for leaves.)

FLOWER COLOR: Pink in buds, opening white

BLOOMING PERIOD: Early June

SIZE: Up to 10 feet tall and 8 to 10 feet wide

BEHAVIOR: A very adaptable, tough plant that provides excellent cover for birds. It has multiple stems that are upright and arching.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Very adaptable, although intolerant of deep shade. Although it will grow most anywhere, it is particularly good for alkaline soils. In Wisconsin ninebark occurs both on exposed cliffs and in fens (moist, alkaline prairies).

NATURAL RANGE: From Quebec to Hudson Bay and west to Minnesota and Colorado, south to South Carolina, Tennessee, Illinois and Arkansas. Occurs in varied habitats throughout Wisconsin, most frequently on exposed cliffs.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Attractive when in bloom. The small, inflated dry fruit goes through a reddish stage, ripening to brown. Bark of old stems peels in several shades of brown and tan – hence its common name.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well to establish new plantings and protect from herbivores while small. After that little care is needed. Older plantings can be rejuvenated by cutting to the ground in winter.

COMPANION PLANTS: On dry, rocky slopes it is found with American bittersweet, Virginia creeper, choke cherry and wild grape. On moist sites with angelica, silky dogwood, flat-top aster and royal fern.