

From Granny's Garden

Granny (Cam MacKenzie)

This winter has been so mild that our plants are all coming out weeks ahead of their usual time. This has motivated all of us to clean up after the winter a little faster, so that the spring blooms and new leaves can be displayed at their best. I'm the worst offender, as I start a job with good intentions, only to have my attention drawn to some other job.

This spring I have noticed that all my lawn edging was lifting and in general looking a mess. So out comes the handy pickaxe and I have been digging a good 8 inches around my beds for replanting my edging. This is one way to check everything in the garden from ground level, weeding and checking to see what needs moving and, heaven forbid, what's died. Nothing died but extra space was found for a shrub that I have had in a pot since my good friend 'Mary' gave it to me. This was a *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum*.

The *Viburnum* genus has from 150 to 175 species shrubs, large and small, evergreen and deciduous. They are ideal for our climate, standing cold weather and dry conditions.

Viburnum plicatum, the familiar Japanese snowball, has round, snowball-shaped flowers. *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum* is a deciduous, medium to large shrub that will bloom in late spring through to summer. It has double rows of lacey, caplike, white flowers on tiered branches, unlike its sister *Mariesii* which has single rows of lacecap-like flowers. This makes for a spectacular display. *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn' is also a deciduous medium to large shrub which will bloom in periods from fall through to spring before the leaves develop. The flowers are pink tinted, tubular and very fragrant.



Viburnum plicatum f. *tomentosum* 'Mariesii'

Photo from www.classicviburnums.com



Viburnum x bodnantense 'Dawn'

Photo from www.rhs.org.uk

The only drawback with this shrub is that when the flowers are over and the leaves come out, they have a most unpleasant odour but, by then, one does not get too close to smell them. Both these shrubs do like sun but can take part shade too. The leaves of these plants also show colour before they drop in the fall.

Viburnum davidii is an evergreen. The leaves are dark green, deeply lined and about three inches in

length. The bush does not grow too tall – mine is at least 15 years but only two-and-a-half to three-feet in width and height. Small white flowers appear in late spring. If male and female plants are planted, the female will produce shiny blue berries.

Like *V. davidii*, *Viburnum tinus* is also an evergreen but it grows much larger and much denser with smaller, shorter leaves. It is easy to clip with shears or a hedge clipper. Flat heads of small white flowers, opening from pink buds bloom in the early spring. The flowers are over by early summer so that a pruning can also get the spent blooms. Both these shrubs are hardy in our climate and a nice addition to the winter landscape.



Viburnum davidii
www.plantpoints.com



Viburnum davidii
plantality.com



Viburnum tinus 'Spring Bouquet'