

Viburnum prunifolium L.

Standardized Common Name: Black Haw

Other Common Names: American Sloe, Nannyberry, Sweet Haw, Sweet Viburnum

Family: Caprifoliaceae or Adoxaceae

Parts in Commerce: Bark (root bark also used)

Identification:

- Slightly curved, channeled or quilled pieces, to 15 cm long
- Thickness variable, up to 6 mm
- Outer bark dull, grayish, sometimes with raised lenticels; older bark often fissured or scaly, sometimes irregularly coated with flat gray lichens
- Inner surface yellowish to reddish-brown, usually longitudinally striated, sometimes with cream to yellow wood fragments adhering
- Fracture short, granular, uneven
- In transverse section, has brown multilayered cork; narrow cortex, if not lost; pale or reddish secondary phloem containing yellowish, irregularly shaped clusters of stone cells (in older bark, extra layers of cork arise in cortex or outer phloem, and outer layers peel off)
- Odor weak but characteristic; when moistened, slightly resembles valerian
- Taste bitter and astringent

Root bark is 1–4 mm thick, and the fracture is more brittle than in stem bark. The outer layer is dull brown or, if the cork has scaled off, reddish or yellowish brown.

Viburnum opulus L. (**Cramp Bark**), a European species, is used similarly and has similar appearance, taste, and anatomy. The two can be distinguished only by using chemical methods such as TLC. Other potentially substituted species of *Viburnum* have purplish rather than grayish bark, or have large amounts of wood adhering to the inner bark layer.

Taxonomy: *Viburnum* includes about 175 species that are mostly native to the Northern Hemisphere, especially Asia, with a second center of diversity in Latin America. *Viburnum prunifolium* belongs to Sect. *Lentago*, which comprises 5 species in eastern North America and 1 species in Mexico.

Description: Large shrub or small tree to 7(–10) m high; trunk to to 25 cm in diameter, frequently branching, bearing short spur branches; bark gray, with interrupted ridges or separat-

ing into irregular flakes 0.5–1.7 cm broad; young twigs slightly hexangular. Leaves varying greatly in shape, often elliptical to ovate or obovate, (2.5–)3.5–9.5(–18) cm long, thin to somewhat leathery; petiole slightly winged; base rounded to cuneate, often oblique, tapering into petiole; apex variable; margins serrate to serrulate; upper surface often bearing reddish stellate hairs along midrib; venation pinnate. Inflorescences mostly terminal on short spur branches, cymose, 3.5–12 cm broad, many-flowered, bracteate. Flowers small; calyx 5-lobed; petals 5, white, basally fused, 2–3 mm long; stamens 5, longer than corolla, filaments basally attached to petals; ovary inferior, stigma 3-lobed. Fruit a berrylike drupe, persistent on the tree, sweet-fleshed, black to blue-black, glaucous, ellipsoid to subglobose, 7–16 mm long, with persistent calyx ring at apex, containing 1 large pyrene (“seed”); pyrene laterally flattened, with a small tubercle at one end.

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