Common Ninebark

Physocarpus opulifolius

Soil Type	Clay, Loam, Sand
Soil Moisture	Dry, Medium, Moist
Sun Exposure	Full Sun to Partial, Shade
Height	5’ - 10’
Width	5’ - 12’
Bloom Color	White, Pink
Bloom Time	May, June
Seed/fruit	Pink seed capsules
Fall Foliage color	Yellow
Spacing	5' - 10'

Arching branches give this shrub a full, mounded shape. It can reach full size in just a year or two. The rapid growth can be desirable, but ninebarks are amenable to pruning after bloom. Pruning in late winter sacrifices spring blooming. It’s an excellent hedge plant and is good at erosion control. Plants can be divided in the early spring, with a sharp spade, chopping right through the middle. Cuttings are easy to root.

Spirea like clusters of five petaled flowers turn into to clusters of reddish-pink capsules. The clusters turn brown and persist into the winter. Bark peels in strips to reveal several layers of light brown to reddish inner bark. Ninebark is a popular 'winter interest' shrub.

Both short and long-tongued bees can access the flower nectar. Mining bees are a pollinator of ninebark flowers.

A single flower contains both male and female parts and develop in sequence, but the flowers are self-infertile. **Three plants are recommended** for reliable fruiting.

Powdery mildew can be prevented by thinning out older stems to increase air circulation.

(Photos: Sarah Michehl, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County)