

# Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

## Doublefile viburnum

*Viburnum plicatum* Thunb.



Dow Gardens Archive, [www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org)

### Background:

This native of Japan and China was brought to the U.S. as an ornamental landscape plant. Many cultivars are still sold in the nursery trade. Some cultivars of this shrub are known as “Japanese snowball” due to the white flower clusters.

### Range:

The range of this species in the U.S. is not yet widespread. It can be found in scattered portions of the Mid-Atlantic (including PA) and New England, as well as Ohio, MI and OR.



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### Description:

This shrub can grow up to 10 feet tall; it is usually wider than it is tall. The horizontal branching gives it a rounded form. The simple, two to four-inch long deciduous leaves are arranged alternately along the branches. Leaves are dark green until the fall, when they turn a reddish purple color. White flowers up to four inches in diameter bloom in May and have no fragrance. Small egg-shaped fruits change from red to black in color in August.



Jeff McMillan© [USDA PLANTS Database](https://www.usda.gov/plants)

### Habitat:

This plant can adapt to various soil types although it prefers moist, well-drained soil. It will grow in full sun to partial shade.

### Biology and Spread:

Fruits grow in abundance along the length of the branches. Birds love to eat the fruits, so they are a major vector for the spread of this species.

### Ecological Threat:

Little is known about the exact impacts this species has on the environment but it is assumed to have the ability to take over forest edges and disturbed areas, replacing native shrubs and understory trees. The U.S. Forest Service ranks it of “local concern”, worth monitoring for possible invasive tendencies.

### How to Control this Species:

Little research has specifically been aimed at controlling this species. However, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden suggests hand-pulling plants that are less than three feet tall.

Taller shrubs should be cut at ground level prior to fruiting, then apply a 20 percent solution of glyphosate herbicide to avoid re-sprouting.

### Look-A-Likes:

Mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) and possumhaw (*Viburnum nudum* L.) (see photo on next page) are native shrubs that could be confused with Japanese snowball.



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