

Vanhoutte Spirea



Vanhoutte Spirea (*Spiraea x vanhouttei*)

General Description

A medium shrub resulting from a cross between Reeves Spirea (*Spiraea cantoniensis*) and Threelobe Spirea (*S. trilobata*) originating before 1866. Vanhoutte spirea is widely planted, but the parent (*S. trilobata*) appears superior in quality.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Pale brown.

Bud Size - 1/8 to 1/4 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, ovate to rhombic-ovate, apex pointed.

Leaf Margins - Base wedge-shaped, teeth irregular, coarse, often incised or obscurely 3 to 5 lobed.

Leaf Surface - Dark, smooth leaves, pale glaucous below.

Leaf Length - 3/4 to 1 3/4 inches.

Leaf Width - 1/2 to 1 1/4 inch.

Leaf Color - Dark, dull blue-green on top, silvery-gray below; purple fall color.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Many-flowered, umbel-like.

Flower Color - White.

Fruit Type - Small follicles.

Fruit Color - Brown.

Form

Growth Habit - Spreading, arching branches.

Texture - Fine, summer; fine, winter.

Crown Height - 4 to 8 feet.

Crown Width - 4 to 8 feet.

Root System - Fibrous, spreading.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Adapted to a wide variety of soils. Performs best on well-drained sites.

Soil pH - 6.5 to 8.0. Adaptable to moderately high pH soils.

Windbreak Suitability Groups - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 3.

Water

Moderately drought tolerant.

Light

Full sun or light shade.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Medium shrub for farmstead windbreaks and highway beautification.

Wildlife

Dense shrub form provides cover to many wildlife species.

Fruit used as food for song and game birds. Hoofed browsers may feed on leaves and twigs.

Agroforestry Products

Medicinal - Used to treat diarrhea, as an astringent, anti-bacterial and early source of salicylic acid, the main component in aspirin, by Native Americans and early settlers.

Urban/Recreational

Attractive shrub with arching branches layered with white flowers. Sometimes referred to as Bridalwreath Spirea. Used in foundation plantings or as an accent plant. May become leggy with age.

Cultivated Varieties

None.

Related Species

Threelobe Spirea (*Spiraea trilobata*) - A denser, compact parent of Vanhoutte Spirea. Cultivars include: Fairy Queen Spirea (*S. trilobata* 'Fairy Queen') and Swan Lake Spirea (*S. trilobata* 'Swan Lake')

Compact Garland Spirea (*S. x arguta* 'Compacta')

Pests

No major pest problems. An extract of *S. nipponica* was toxic to various insect pests.