**Introduction**

Large, leathery, medium to light green, highly lustrous leaves and clusters of extremely fragrant, small, white flowers, completely covering the plant in springtime, make Awabuki Sweet Viburnum a plant with great potential. The shiny leaves are quite distinctive from the dull, dark green, blunt-tip leaves of the species. For some reason, the species has fallen out of favor as a small tree in recent years, but it is often used as a screen or clipped hedge. Its dense, spreading, evergreen habit makes Sweet Viburnum suitable for use as a small tree, reaching only about 15 to 20 feet at maturity, with an open, multibranched, rounded canopy. The flowers are often followed by small, showy red berries which are highly ornamental and turn black when ripe. This is a small tree which should be tried, and some nursery operators are beginning to grow it. Thirty-year-old plants grow to about 18 feet tall and wide.

**General Information**

**Scientific name:** Viburnum odoratissimum var. awabuki  
**Pronunciation:** vye-BER-num oh-duh-ruh-TISS-ih-mum variety aw-wah-BOO-kee  
**Common name(s):** Awabuki Sweet Viburnum  
**Family:** Caprifoliaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 9A through 11 (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Invasive potential:** has been evaluated using the IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida’s Natural Areas (Fox et al. 2005). This species is not documented in any undisturbed natural areas in Florida. Thus, it is not considered a problem species and may be used in Florida.  
**Uses:** screen; hedge; specimen; deck or patio; street without sidewalk; container or planter; sidewalk cutout (tree pit);

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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Description
Height: 15 to 20 feet
Spread: 15 to 20 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical
Crown shape: round
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: coarse

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: pinnate, bowed, brachidodrome
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen, evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white/cream/gray
Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit
Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: red, black
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: thick
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture
Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other
Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: yes
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible
Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management
Sweet Viburnum grows quickly in full sun or partial shade on a wide variety of soils. Relatively maintenance-free, Sweet Viburnum grown as a tree will require only occasional pruning to control size and shape. This would be a good tree for planting along a street where power lines or other obstructions limit overhead space.

The cultivar 'Emerald Lustre' has larger leaves and 'Nanum' is a dwarf form.

Propagation is by cuttings or layerings.

Pests
This tree is usually free of pests.

Viburnum aphid is gray to dark green and feeds in clusters at the tips of the branches, causing leaf curl. The insects can be dislodged with high pressure water spray from the garden hose.
Inspect the stems of unhealthy-looking plants for possible scale infestations. If found, spray with horticultural oil for some control.

Caterpillars eat holes in the new foliage. This may be more troublesome in the nursery than in the landscape.

Thrips, mites, white-fly, bagworms, and sooty mold are also problems, but none are normally serious.

**Diseases**

Bacterial leafspot causes round, water-soaked spots on leaves and young stems. These develop into shrunken, brown areas about 1/8-inch in diameter. Destroy infected leaves.

Bacterial crown gall forms galls on the lower stems. Do not replant in the same spot.

Shoot blight causes grayish to brown decayed spots on the leaves. The spots first appear at the leaf margins, then spread to the rest of the leaf. Infected flower clusters or twigs are killed.

A number of fungi cause leaf spots. Rake up and destroy infected leaves.

Downy mildew and powdery mildew cause a white powdery growth on the leaves.

**Literature Cited**