

Holodiscus discolor - Growing Guide

Growing Holodiscus Discolor

Ocean Spray

This is another fairly obscure and less well known genus of deciduous shrubs which has its admirers and supporters although they are perhaps few and far between. They have quite a lot in common with Sorbaria from East Asia although *H. discolor* comes from west North America. Both are Rosaceae.

H. discolor grows eventually to 10-12ft with a similar spread (much like Sorbaria). It is therefore a vigorous upright shrub with arching branches. It has lobed grey-green leaves which are white and hairy underneath.

H. discolor is also known as *Spiraea discolor* and this rather sums up its flowers. These are individually tiny and cup shaped. They are borne in large panicles or plumes which are pendulous and can smother the shrub in mid-summer with their creamy white.

This plant is suitable for the back of a border or as a specimen shrub in woodland. Like Sorbaria it also prefers a moist and damp soil in sun or partial shade. It is not necessarily a plant for growing beside a stream or pond but this is where it may well perform best.

To keep the plant under control prune out a few older shoots every few years after flowering. It roots easily from semi-ripe cuttings in summer and it is an easy plant to layer if you wish. Seed should be sown as soon as ripe in containers in the cold frame.

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