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Planting And Care Of Shrubs

By Paul Curran

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In general, trees and shrubs are planted and cared for in the same way, the difference between them being chiefly one of height. One definition of the difference, however, is that while a tree has only one trunk, a shrub has several stems or trunks.

Not so long ago the number of reliable shrubs was quite limited, but today the many new hybrids have lengthened the list and the gardener's choice is almost endless. No matter the region, it is now possible to plant shrubs that will satisfy color needs, bloom at various seasons, cover bare spots where grass won't grow, or grow in such profusion and depth that screening purposes are served.

Shrubs are valuable to the gardener because they bridge the gap between trees and flowers. As do trees, they serve as boundary markers, soften the lines of buildings, act as a decorative background for flower beds and hide unsightly views.

Like flowers, they add character and shape to the garden, blooming forth with colorful blossoms and attracting birds with their berries. One big item in their favor is that they mature rapidly, yet remain as hardy and long-lived as trees.

Planting of shrubs is tittle different from planting of trees. Early spring is the most favorable time since it gives the plant a long spell of good growing weather to get reestablished. In the milder sections of the country, however, transplanting may be done through the winter months. In New England, evergreens may be planted in September and May, and deciduous shrubs in October and

May.

Dry roots are the chief cause of planting failures, and steps should be taken to prevent this—i.e., balling and burlapping, and heeling in. After receiving shrubs from a nursery, water as soon as possible; shade them from sunshine at first, mulch the ground around them, and prune back severely.

The older the plant you get, the more severely it will have to be cut back, so that in the long run, you come out just as well buying the less expensive, smaller shrubs. Forsythia and azalea may be moved while in flower, but most plants should not.

Watering in the fall, before the ground freezes, is important for box, azalea, rhododendron, mountain laurel and broadleaf evergreens, whose leaves lose moisture in winter.

Pruning of shrubs helps to keep them young and vigorous. Rather than cutting all branches off to an even length, prune out the older branches, even though they may be sound. With lilacs, for example, use a keyhole saw, and cut as close to the ground as possible, cutting out the oldest stems.

Some shrubs need pruning every year, especially those which have dead branches as a result of winterkill. (These include some deutzias, hydrangeas, buddleia, spireas and privets.) Other shrubs such as rhododendron, azaleas, magnolia and buddleia should have the flower heads pruned off after blooming.

Paul Curran is CEO of Cuzcom Internet Publishing Group and webmaster at Trees-and-Bushes.com, providing access to their nursery supplier for a range of quality plants, trees, bushes, shrubs, seeds and garden products.

Landscaping Shrubs

By Mary Miller

Defining your landscape can be a challenge, but starting with simple shrubs is a no-hassle, low-maintenance option. Shrubs can add color and beauty to your yard with virtually no upkeep. There are so many different varieties to choose from, it's easy to find the perfect one to complement your landscape.

Types of Shrubs To add colour and texture to your yard, choose one of many options including azalea, dogwood, hardy shrub rose, hydrangea or lilac. Planting a colorful shrub border will add a wonderful

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focal point along your home or walkway, and bring an element of interest by adding height to an existing flower garden.

Border on the Unique The key to creating a successful border is to plan your design using layers of colors and textures. Virtually every shrub variety will add all–season color and texture to your landscape. Keep in mind that shrubs can grow to be enormous, but if you keep them trimmed and maintained, they will continue to bring beauty and style to your home.

You can also use shrubs to line and define your property. This can be the perfect way to create a border between your home and your neighbour's property. Unlike a large border of trees or an obstructive fence, shrubs will divide the space without making you feel shut in. Carefully chosen and well–maintained shrubs are an attractive and natural solution that both you and your neighbors will enjoy.

Shrub Maintenance For shrubs to grow successfully, they need to have good soil. You may need to condition the soil by adding compost. Be sure that the planting area is well drained. Before you plant your shrubs, check to ensure that they are not root bound. Gently loosen the roots with a knife, place the root ball in the soil, cover and give your freshly planted shrub lots of water.

Your new landscape of shrubs may look a little empty at first, but over time the new plants will spread out and fill the gaps. The beauty of shrub landscapes is that you don't have to plant a lot to get a lot. If you choose to fill the spaces, add easy–care annuals, or perennials for everlasting beauty. When the work is done, you will be able to relax and take pride in your unique landscaping design that everyone will enjoy.

Mary Miller writes for several online magazines, including

and



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