

Deciduous Flowering Shrubs

For some reason shrubs are often overlooked in planning a garden and yet they offer the opportunity for great diversity. They have year round appeal with their ornamental flowers, fragrances, fruits, outstanding fall colors, and attractive barks. Shrubs come in many sizes, shapes, textures, and flower forms adding great interest and grace to the garden. A shrub can be found for ornamental beauty for every month of the year. Most shrubs require little maintenance.

Choosing the Proper Shrub

In choosing the proper shrub one needs to consider the following:

- Mature size of the shrub and growth habit
- Bloom time. In spring there is an over-abundance of flowers in the landscape so perhaps a shrub that blooms in the summer, fall or late winter would add more interest to your garden.
- Other ornamental features, such as berries, attractive summer foliage, beautiful fall coloration or unusual flower color. In other words, choose a shrub that has three or even four seasons of interest such as; Virginia Sweetspire, Viburnums, or Oakleaf Hydrangea.
- Proper Location: Does this shrub do best in sun or shade?
- Birdlovers alert!! Many shrubs attract neat and unusual birds that can eat insects and help the ecology of the garden.
- Choose shrubs that are free of insects and diseases.

Planting Instructions

1. Dig a wide shallow hole at least twice the width of the rootball. Plant the shrub high so that about 2" of the rootball is above ground level. Work in about ¼ organic compost with the backfill soil.
2. "Score" the rootball before planting if necessary.
3. Apply no more than 2" – 3" on mulch. Keep the mulch away from the main stem. Excess mulch can result in root and stem rot.
4. Wait to fertilize. The shrub has been fertilized to encourage growth in the nursery. Once the shrub is established, yearly fertilizing will be sufficient.
5. Water the plant thoroughly and deeply at the time of planting.

Pruning

Observe the bloom time. If blooming occurs in early spring, the buds burst forth on old wood and pruning should be done after flowering. If the shrub blooms on new

wood in the summer, then prune in late winter or early spring. A general rule for renewal pruning : prune 1/3 of the branches each year.

Some of our Favorites

Sweet Pepperbush, *Clethra alnifolia*, is a superb shrub with a long season of interest. The slightly fragrant white flowers are held upright in panicles six inches long during July and August. It will grow in full sun or light shade and is tolerant of wet areas and salt sprays. A superior shrub valued for its attractive bright green summer foliage and clear yellow fall color. A must for the shrub border.

Oakleaf Hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*, is a multi-season plant that grows well in partial shade to full sun and matures to about 6' tall and wide. This summer flowering shrub has large pyramidal shaped clusters of white flowers. The white flowers change to a pinkish color before turning brown and may last into fall. The bold oak-shaped leaves turn a magnificent crimson and purple in the fall. As the stems mature, the bark peels exposing a lovely cinnamon color. This plant provides year round interest.

Dwarf Fothergilla, *Fothergilla gardenii*, is a refined, graceful shrub growing 3' – 5' tall and not quite as wide. It grows best in full sun and rarely needs pruning. White, fragrant bottlebrush flowers appear in the early spring, blending well with flower bulbs and perennials. The fall color is exceptional with the foliage turning bright yellow-orange to fiery red. This native shrub with multi-season interest certainly deserves more attention in the garden.

Burning Bush, *Euonymus alatus 'compactus'*, is one of the most reliable plants for brilliant red fall color. The mature height of 8', with an equal spread, make it an ideal specimen for screening or as a hedge. The corky bark "wings" are most attractive in flower arrangements. Plant in the full sun for best color.

Virginia Sweetspire, *Itea virginica 'Henry's Garnet'*, is a native shrub growing about 3' – 5' tall, and somewhat wider. The white fragrant, pendulous flowers bloom in late spring. The burgundy and crimson fall colors are lovely and last well into the fall. The burgundy colored stems hold their color into the winter months. This "three season" shrub does well in full sun and prefers a moist, well drained soil.

Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, a deciduous holly, is a native shrub that originated in swampy areas. In the garden, Winterberry will tolerate some moisture. Although it will do well in light shade, full sun is best for fruiting. This is a large shrub growing 6'-8' tall, with an equal spread. Winterberry is highly prized for its magnificent display of fall and winter berries. Remember you will need a pollinator to ensure a good berry set.

Slender Deutzia, *Deutzia gracilis 'Nikko'*, is a mounding low spreading cultivar that grows to about 2' tall and 4'-5' wide. It will grow in sun or light shade. 'Nikko' blooms profusely in May and is one of the most lovely of all small shrubs. The foliage turns burgundy in the fall.

Witch Hazel, *Hamamelis intermedia* 'Arnold's Promise', can be grown as a small patio tree or a large shrub. This vase shaped shrub can grow to about 15' tall and performs well in full sun or light shade. The fragrant clear yellow, spider-like, flowers may be open as early as February. In the fall the leaves turn a rich red and yellow color. This native shrub looks attractive for three seasons.

Butterfly Bush, *Buddleia davidii*, is one of the showiest summer flowering shrubs. This fast growing multi-stemmed shrub grows about 8' tall and wide. It is valued for its fragrant flowers that attract hummingbirds and butterflies. The lilac-shaped flowers bloom from July until fall in shades of white, pink, violet, and lilac blue. Grow in the full sun. Prune to 8" – 10" in the early spring, this plant blooms on "new wood" and you will not be cutting off any potential flowers.

Crape Myrtle, *Lagerstroemia*, is a very attractive, multi-stemmed large shrub or small tree. Sizes range from 5' – 20' in height, depending of the cultivar. This is a spectacular summer blooming shrub and the large flower clusters come in many colors. As the plant matures, the bark exfoliates, exposing a mottled light tan very smooth bark. The fall coloration ranges from yellow-orange, to red, adding another reason to grow this handsome plant in your garden.

Viburnum, No garden would be complete without considering these wonderful, diverse plants that range in size from 5' to 15' tall. Some are grown for wonderful fragrances, some for their beautiful flower and fruit, and others for their lovely fall colors. We try to have several varieties always available at the garden center.