

**Garden anchor**

# Shrubs are more than worth it

A garden is an oasis. A private space where we can relax and temporarily escape from hectic living to get in touch with ourselves. How sweet it is.

And shrubs are an anchor. They not only unite a home to the exterior picture and renew comforting seclusion year after year, but their presence increases property values.

Shrubs can soften or add depth in corners when grouped, hide eyesores, shout hello at a doorstep, or provide fruits, shade and shelter to welcome birds.

They can serve as an exciting backdrop for flowers. Strong foliated ones play an important role among weaker foliage and some add interest in winter with ornamental bark.

**More economical**

Shrubs are more economical than fencing and although an informal hedge may take up more space than a tidy, formal one, housekeeping is easier because little or no pruning is required.

These living walls define boundaries, help silence street noise, block undesirable views, neatly separate lawns from a path and guide visitors to the door.

Little fellows like the Dwarf Lilac or lemon flowering Potentilla will flaunt their flowers as low-growing informal hedges; closely set evergreens will do their darndest to provide a windbreak; and thorny Rugosa roses will not only act as a saucy barrier, but are easy-care and perfect for "budding" enthusiasts.

**Colorful flowers**

Some, with colorful flowers/foliage, can glorify gardens alone. An established smoke bush enveloped in an eye-grabbing purple or green whorl of smoke is a unique late summer example.

The rose of Sharon is an elegant favorite whose shape is suitable in the back of a garden bed or beside a walkway. Just when gardens are lagging, it explodes from head-to-toe with tantalizing hibiscus/hollyhock-like blooms. It's a honey. Once seen, you'll want to make room for one at the very least.

Bridalwreath spirea with arching branches that hold a wealth of white spring flowers has been popular for decades. As are lilacs with fragrant blooms that whisper their scent under open windows, beside doors or around patios and pools.

**Evokes memories**


Always, their delicate perfume evokes memories. Who doesn't remember tightly clutching a bouquet of lilacs to shyly present to their primary school teacher? And snowballs? Or pussywillows? Many a school desk displayed handfuls of those large fluffy globes or plump 'n' fuzzy catkins.

New gardens and the overhauling of old-timers begins with good soil, creative juices and the "germinating" of ideas. If you summer up north, consider choosing spring flowering shrubs for at-home enjoyment and summer bloomers for cottage days. But, before purchasing your growing investment, pause for a while and get acquainted with them to see if they meet your requirements.

**Dominate property?**

Will selections dominate your property or your neighbor's?

**Green N' Growing**



*Elaine Gordon*

Will dropped fruit cause clean up headaches? What foliage/flower combinations are appealing? Are they high or low maintenance? What are their likes, dislikes,

hardiness and susceptibility to disease? Do you want to attract birds? Will shapes eventually smother windows?

Landscaping is a costly venture, so it's good management to avoid impulse buying. Take your time as you express your home's personality. Step-by-step planning on paper will help ensure the right shrubs are paraded in the right spot. Perhaps

you may want to plant some memories for your children to rekindle a cherished few of your own.

Remember, too, that those little guys will grow larger in no time at all, so allow elbow room for mature heights and widths. Don't mistake quantity for quality. More is not better. It's economical in the long run.



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