



# Uses of Shrubs

Shrubs can be great for planting on banks or slopes. This technique eliminates the need to mow in areas that can be dangerous to use a mower. Suitable shrubs have suckering root systems or branches that root where they touch the ground. A good shrub for banks and slopes would be [Aronia](#) Iriquis Beauty. Compact shrub with white spring flowers and shiny green foliage turning red in the fall. Grows to 3 feet high.

Use shrubs tolerant of adverse growing conditions.

Shrubs can be used as a barrier to unwanted foot traffic. Especially those with thorns. Consider the possibility of injury resulting from the use of thorny plants. Always consider future possibilities. Pruning, maintaining, or removing a planting of thorny shrubs is difficult. An armed barrier plant should not be invasive. Species of roses are used effectively as barrier plants, but they spread rapidly and are difficult to get rid of.

Shrubs used in hedges or screens provide privacy. A hedge is clipped or sheared to keep it at some definite width and height.

A screen grows to whatever height and width is normal for plants making up the screen. [Blue muffin](#) Viburnum and [Fine Line Rhamnus](#) are two great choices for screening. They fast growing and form tall narrow screens with little care. It's also resistant to deer browsing which is a serious problem these days.

Shrubs in screens should attain the desired height and width and have a dense branching habit. Avoid those with a tendency to form large thickets of suckers. When shrubs get bare at the bottom, cut the plants off within a few inches of the ground to rejuvenate the screen. Screens tend to look more natural and require less maintenance than hedges.

Hedges provide privacy and create a thick barrier. Hedges need to be sheared at least once per year to maintain a manicured appearance. Hedges should be sheared to be wider at the bottom than on the top, to prevent the bottom of the hedge from getting shaded out and becoming bare.

Most deciduous hedges are rejuvenated by cutting back to within a few inches of the ground. Shrubs selected for a hedge must be tolerant of shearing.

Here are the steps to follow when starting a hedge with young deciduous shrubs. At planting, cut the plants to within 12 to 14 inches of the ground then allow

them to grow. When new growth forms, clip it 2 to 3 times during the growing season. Once the hedge shape is established, fewer sheerings are needed. A string, stretched along the hedge at the desired height, serves as a shearing guide to maintain a uniform height. Do not shear the hedge after late summer. Spacing of plants in a hedge depends on the type of plant used.

Shrubs direct traffic around property corners by keeping pedestrians on the sidewalk. Plantings in the front yard should not block a drivers view of the street when leaving the driveway. Low shrubs at corners of walkways help keep pedestrian traffic on the walk and off the grass.

Trees growing close together may create a mowing problem. A planting of shade tolerant shrubs around the trees makes mowing easier and protects trees from lawn mower injury. This type of planting ties the trees together in one mass and works best when the trees are fairly close together.

A foundation planting need not consist of a solid row of shrubs; a few carefully selected and placed shrubs can be more effective.

A number of shrubs can be used as ground covers. Like other ground covers, they should adapt to conditions found in the growing area. [LITTLE HENRY](#) is an excellent plant to use as a shrubby ground cover. It is tolerant of both sun or shade, suckers slightly to form a low dense mat eliminating the need to weed and mow.