

# Deciduous Shrubs

Fact Sheet No. 7.415

Gardening Series | Trees and Shrubs

by R.A. Cox and J.E. Klett\*

Shrubs are immediately noticeable in the landscape because they are at eye level. Flower and fruit displays, interesting foliage shapes and colors, and even bark color and texture add interest. Shrubs can visually anchor a building to a site, guide the eye toward or away from certain views, and bridge the space between lower-growing perennials and taller trees. Deciduous shrubs offer seasonal changes not found with evergreen shrubs.

Because of their varied size, shrubs are versatile landscape performers. A 2-foot shrub can complement perennials in the flower bed, while a 20-foot hedge can screen even the largest property. Some shrubs may be pruned to a single or few stems for growth as small specimen trees. Pruning others flat to decorate a wall in an espalier can provide a focal point for a courtyard or walkway. Space shrubs singly or mass them in small odd-numbered groups to fill in a shrub border. Spacing closely in a line will allow plants to grow into a hedge or screen. The spacing at planting depends on the growth habit and mature size of the shrub species, as well as the intended purpose.

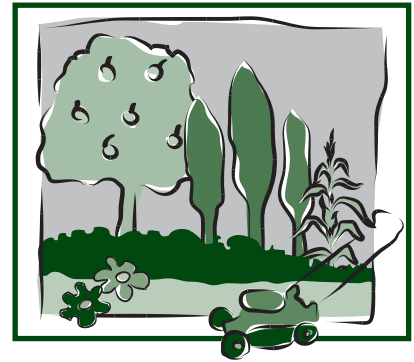
Before purchasing shrubs, decide the function you need them to perform in the landscape. Are you interested in screening an undesirable view, intercepting the glare of car headlights from the street, hiding

the house foundation, reducing the wind velocity, attracting birds, or adding flowers or fall color?

After determining the function, write down a description of the intended planting site to include soil texture (clay, sand, etc.), available moisture, and exposure (compass direction and sunny vs. shady). Remember, as landscapes mature, a sunny site may change to a shady one.

Colorado growing conditions present both challenges and opportunities. Dry, sunny days and cool nights make plant diseases relatively rare and prolong or intensify flowering. Late frosts may damage the flowers of spring flowering shrubs. Soil conditions often are not conducive to growing certain species. Both climate and soil conditions vary widely across the state, meaning some shrubs may grow well in one area but not in others.

The following list, while not comprehensive, provides information on the more commonly available deciduous shrubs for elevations below 6,000 feet. For a listing of shrubs adapted to higher elevations, refer to fact sheet 7.423, [Trees and Shrubs for Mountain Areas](#). Drought-tolerant shrubs are listed in 7.229, [Xeriscaping: Trees and Shrubs](#). Native shrubs suitable for landscapes are listed in 7.422, [Native Shrubs for Colorado Landscapes](#).



## Quick Facts

- Use shrubs for screening, privacy, windbreaks, wildlife habitats, landscape color and texture.
- Deciduous shrubs provide a seasonal change of interest in the landscape.
- Well-placed shrubs take into account available space, exposure and soil conditions.
- Table 1 lists shrubs for elevations below 6,000 feet that are widely available in garden centers and nurseries.

See Table 1, pages 2-5.

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**Table 1. Most commonly available shrubs for elevations below 6,000 feet.**

Plant Name	Soil Moisture <sup>a</sup>	Exposure <sup>b</sup>	Flower Color <sup>c</sup> and Month	Fruit <sup>d</sup>	Fall Color <sup>e</sup>	Comments
<b>SMALL SHRUBS</b> (less than 4 feet high when mature)						
<i>Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea</i> Purpleleaf Japanese barberry						
'Crimson Pygmy'	L-M	S-PSh	NI	R	R-Pu	Reddish-purple foliage.
Golden Nugget™	L-M	S-PSh	NI	R	O	Golden foliage.
<i>Caryopteris</i> spp. Blue mist spirea	L-M	S-PSh	Bl-P/7-9	Tan	NI	Cut back in late winter.
<i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Kelsey' Kelsey dogwood	H	S-PSh	NI	NI	R-Pu	Mounded; red stems.
<i>Cotoneaster apiculatus</i> Cranberry cotoneaster	M	S-PSh	P/5	R	R	Mounded habit.
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> Rock cotoneaster	M	S-PSh	P/5	R	R-Pu	Good tall groundcover; distinctive branching pattern.
<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> Smooth Hydrangea						
'Annabelle'	M-H	Sh-PSh	W/7-9	NI	NI	Large, showy flowers.
Incrediball®	M-H	Sh-PSh	W/7-9	NI	NI	Very large flowers.
Invincibelle® Spirit	M-H	Sh-PSh	P/7-9	NI	NI	Very large flowers.
<i>Hypericum kalmianum</i> Hypericum (St. John's-wort)	L-M	S-PSh	Y/7-9	NI	O-Pu	Blue-green foliage; hardier.
'Hidcote'	M	S-PSh	Y/7-9	NI	NI	Cut back to ground in fall.
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> 'Lodense' Privet, 'Lodense'	L-M	S-Sh	W/6-7	B	NI	Dark green foliage held late.
<i>Lonicera</i> spp. Honeysuckle						
'Emerald Mound'	M	S-Sh	W/5-6	R	NI	Mounded habit.
'Wolfii'	M	S-Sh	P/5-6	-	NI	Fragrant, trumpet-like flowers.
'Clavey's Dwarf'	M	S-Sh	W/5-6	R	NI	Good hedge.
<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> Potentilla (shrubby cinquefoil)	L-M	S-PSh	Y-W/6-9	NI	NI	Compact, rounded.
'Abbotswood'			W			Spreading.
'Coronation Triumph'			Bright Y			Upright.
'Gold Drop'			Golden Y			Compact.
'Jackmannii'			Deep Y			Upright.
'Katherine Dykes'			Light Y			Spreading.
<i>Prunus besseyi</i> Pawnee Buttes® Creeping Western sandcherry	L	S	W/4-5	B	R-Pu	Low groundcover. Plant Select® 2000.
<i>Ribes alpinum</i> Alpine currant	L-M	S-Sh	NI	NI	Y	Good for hedge.
<i>Rhus aromatica</i> 'Gro-low' Gro-low sumac	L-M	S-PSh	Y/3-4	R	R-Pu	Vigorous, widespreading.
<i>Ribes trilobata</i> 'Autumn Amber' Autumn Amber Threelobed sumac	L	S	Y/3-4	R	O-Y	Low groundcover.
<i>Spiraea x bumalda</i> Bumald spirea	M-H	S-PSh	P-Pu/6-8	NI	Br-Pu	Spreading, flat-topped.
'Anthony Waterer'			R-rose			
'Froebelii'			P			Slightly taller.
'Goldflame'			P		R-O	Yellow-green foliage.
<i>Spiraea japonica</i> 'Little Princess' Little Princess spirea	M	S-PSh	P/6-7	NI	Br	Delicate, mounded.
'Alpina'	M	S-PSh	P/6-7	NI	Br	Low groundcover.
<i>Symphoricarpos x chenaultii</i> Hancock coralberry	M	S-PSh	NI	R-P	NI	Blue-green leaves; persistent fruit; lower growth.
<b>MEDIUM SHRUBS</b> (4-6 feet high when mature)						
<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> Black chokeberry	M-H	S-PSh	W/5-6	B	O-R	Glossy green foliage.
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i> <i>Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea</i> Purpleleaf Japanese barberry	L-M	S-PSh	NI	R	O-R	Spiny; hedges or barrier. Reddish-purple foliage.
'Rose Glow'						Pink blotches on leaves.
<i>Berberis</i> x 'Tara' Emerald Carousel™ barberry	L-M	S-PSh	Y/5-6	R	O-R	Arching-rounded growth habit. Heavily spined.
<i>Buddleia davidii</i> Butterfly bush	M	S-PSh	L/6-7	NI	NI	Cut back in late winter. Many varieties.

**Table 1 (cont.). Most commonly available shrubs for elevations below 6,000 feet.**

Plant Name	Soil Moisture <sup>a</sup>	Exposure <sup>b</sup>	Flower Color <sup>c</sup> and Month	Fruit <sup>d</sup>	Fall Color <sup>e</sup>	Comments
<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i> Flowering quince	M	S-PSH	R/P/W/4	Y	NI	Spiny stems; large fruit only occasionally.
<i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Isanti' Isanti dogwood	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	W	R-Pu	Red twigs; compact habit.
<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compacta' Compact burning bush	M	S-Sh	NI	P/O	R	Slightly winged twigs.
<i>Ligustrum x vicaryi</i> Golden vicary privet	M	S	W/6-7	NI	NI	May show winter dieback.
<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i> Russian sage	L	S	L-Pu/7-9	NI	NI	Very small, fine leaves; cut back to 6" in late winter.
<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i> 'Aureus' Golden mockorange	M-H	S	W/5-6	NI	NI	Yellow foliage all season.
<i>Prunus x cistena</i> Cistena plum (purpleleaf sand cherry)	M	S-PSH	P/5-6	B-Pu	Pu	Purple foliage all season.
<i>Prunus glandulosa</i> Dwarf flowering almond	M	S	P/4-5	NI	NI	Flowers precede leaves.
'Alba'			W			Single flowers.
'Rosea Plena'			P			Double flowers.
<i>Rhus trilobata</i> Threeleaf sumac (skunkbush)	L	S-PSH	Y/4	R	Y-O-R	Native; pungent foliage.
<i>Ribes aureum</i> Golden currant	L-M	S-PSH	Y/4-5	B	R-Pu	Native; fragrant flowers.
<i>Ribes odoratum</i> Clove currant	L-M	S-PSH	Y/4-5	B	Y-R	Clove scented flowers.
<i>Salix purpurea nana</i> Dwarf arctic willow	M-H	S-PSH	NI	NI	NI	Fine texture; needs winter moisture.
<i>Spiraea x vanhouttei</i> Vanhoutte spirea	L-M	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI	Br	Graceful, arching habit.
'Renaissance'	L-M	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI	Br	Very similar.
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> Snowberry	L-M	S-PSH	P-W/6-7	W	NI	Very adaptable.
<i>Syringa meyeri</i> 'Palibin' Lilac, dwarf Korean	L-M	S-PSH	L-P/5-6	NI	NI	Rounded, dense habit.
<i>Syringa patula</i> 'Miss Kim' Miss Kim lilac	L-M	S	Bl-L/5-6	NI	R-Pu	Rounded, dense habit.
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Compactum' Compact European cranberrybush viburnum	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	R	NI	Showy, persistent fruit.
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i> 'Compactum' Compact American cranberrybush viburnum	M-H	S-PSH	NI	NI	R	Dense, rounded.
<i>Weigela florida</i> Weigela	M	S-PSH	P/5-6	NI	NI	Trumpet-shaped flowers.
'Red Prince'	M	S-PSH	R/6	NI	NI	
Wine and Roses®	M	S-PSH	P/6	NI	NI	Purple foliage.
<b>LARGE SHRUBS</b> (greater than 6 feet tall when mature)						
<i>Amelanchier</i> spp. Serviceberry (Juneberry)	M	S-PSH	W/4-5	R-Pu	YOR	Shrub or small tree.
<i>Caragana arborescens</i> Siberian peashrub	L	S	Y/5	NI	Y	Very adaptable.
<i>Cornus sericea</i> Redtwig dogwood	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	W-BI	R-Pu	Red stems in winter.
'Baileyi'				W-BI		Red stems in winter.
'Flaviramea' (yellowtwig dogwood)				W-BI		Yellow stems in winter.
<i>Cotinus coggygria</i> Smoketree	M	S-PSH	P-W/7	NI	Pu-O	Flowers like "pink smoke."
'Royal Purple'						Purple leaves; less hardy.
'Nordine'						Purple leaves; hardier.
<i>Cotoneaster lucidus</i> Hedge cotoneaster	L-M	S-PSH	P/5	B	R-O	Screening or hedge use. Can re-seed.
<i>Euonymus alatus</i> Burning bush (winged euonymus)	M	S-Sh	NI	P/R/O	R	Winged stems; pink fruit.
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i> Spindletree (European euonymus)	M	S-Sh	NI	R-Pu/O	R-Pu	Shrub or small tree.
<i>Forsythia</i> spp. Forsythia	M	S	Y/3-4	NI	Y-Pu	
'Meadowlark'						Hardy flower buds.
'Northern Gold'						Smaller; flower buds hardy.
'Northern Sun'						Flower buds hardy.
<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> Rose-of-Sharon (shrub althea)	M	S-PSH	V/7-8	NI	NI	Showy, late flowers.
<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i> 'Grandiflora' PeeGee hydrangea	M-H	S-PSH	W/7-8	NI	NI	Large flower clusters.
'Limelight'	M-H	PSH-Sh	G-P/7-8	NI	NI	Upright - rounded.

**Table 1 (cont.). Most commonly available shrubs for elevations below 6,000 feet.**

<b>Plant Name</b>	<b>Soil Moisture<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Exposure<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Flower Color<sup>c</sup> and Month</b>	<b>Fruit<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>Fall Color<sup>e</sup></b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i> Beautybush	L-M	S-PSH	P/5-6	NI	Br	Shredding bark; coarse texture.
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> 'Cheyenne' Cheyenne privet	M	S-PSH	W/6-7	B	NI	If sheared, no flowers or fruit. Holds leaves late.
<i>Lonicera korolkowii</i> Blueleaf honeysuckle	L-M	S	P/5	R	NI	Resistant to aphids.
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i> Tatarian Honeysuckle 'Arnold Red'	L-M	S-PSH	R/5	R	NI	Some resistance to aphids.
<i>Philadelphus x virginalis</i> Mockorange	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI	NI	Fragrant flowers; coarse texture.
<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i> Cheyenne® Cheyenne Mockorange	L-M	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI	NI	Fragrant flowers; coarse texture. Plant Select® 2001.
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> Common ninebark 'Dart's Golden' 'Luteus' Diabolo®	M	S	W/5-6	NI	Y-O	Shreddy bark; adaptable.  Yellowish-green foliage. Golden yellow foliage. Red-purple foliage.
<i>Prunus tomentosa</i> Nanking (Manchu) cherry	L-M	S-PSH	P-W/4	R	Y	Edible fruit attracts birds.
<i>Prunus triloba</i> Double flowering plum	M	S-PSH	P/4	NI	NI	Double pink flowers.
<i>Prunus virginiana</i> Common chokecherry 'Schubert' (Canada red cherry)	M	S-PSH	W/5	R-Pu	Y	Suckering, attracts birds.  Green leaves turn maroon.
<i>Rhamnus frangula</i> 'Columnaris' Columnar buckthorn (Tallhedge) 'Asplenifolia'	M	S-PSH	NI	R-B	Y	Thornless; vertical habit.  Long, narrow leaves.
<i>Rhus glabra</i> Smooth sumac	L-M	S-PSH	G-Y/5-6	R	R-O	Suckers; best in poor soil.
<i>Rhus typhina</i> Staghorn sumac 'Laciniata'	L-M	S-PSH	G-Y/5-6	R	R-O	Larger; suckers; best in poor soil.  Deeply cut leaves.
<i>Salix discolor</i> Pussywillow	H	S	Gray/3-4	NI	NI	Bright yellow leaves. Early catkins (flowers), very susceptible to canker.
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i> 'Aurea' Golden elder	M-H	S	W/6-7	R-B	NI	Golden leaves; edible fruit.
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> Black Lace™	M-H	S	W/6-7	R-B	NI	Lacy, dark purple foliage.
<i>Sorbaria sorbifolia</i> Ash-leaf spirea (Ural false-spirea)	M	S-PSH	W/6-7	NI	NI	Lush foliage; suckering.
<i>Syringa x chinensis</i> Chinese lilac	M	S	Pu/5	NI	Y	Small leaves, loose flowers.
<i>Syringa x prestoniae</i> Canada lilac 'James McFarlane' 'Miss Canada'	M	S	BI-L-P-Pu/5-6	NI	Y	Blooms later.  Upright growth habit. Slightly smaller.
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> Common lilac (includes "French hybrids") 'Charles Joly' 'President Grevy'	M	S	V/5	NI	NI	Prone to powdery mildew. Many varieties. Double flowers. Double flowers.
<i>Viburnum x burkwoodii</i> Burkwood viburnum	M	S-PSH	P-W/4-5	R-B	NI	Leathery leaves persist.
<i>Viburnum lantana</i> Wayfaring tree viburnum 'Mohican'	L-M	S-PSH	W/4-5	R-B	Pu-Br	Leathery leaves persist.  More compact form.

**Table 1 (cont.). Most commonly available shrubs for elevations below 6,000 feet.**

Plant Name	Soil Moisture <sup>a</sup>	Exposure <sup>b</sup>	Flower Color <sup>c</sup> and Month	Fruit <sup>d</sup>	Fall Color <sup>e</sup>	Comments
<i>Viburnum lentago</i> Nannyberry viburnum	M	S-PSh	W/4-5	Bl	ROPu	Can be used as a small tree.
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> European cranberrybush viburnum 'Roseum' (Snowball)	M-H	S-PSh	W/5-6	R	R-Pu	Fruit persists; aphid prone.
<i>Viburnum x rhytidophylloides</i> 'Alleghany' Alleghany viburnum	M	S-PSh	W/5-6	R-B	Pu-Br	Showier flowers; aphid prone; no fruit. Leathery leaves persist. Plant Select® 1997.
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i> American cranberrybush viburnum 'Wentworth'	M-H	S-PSh	W/5-6	R	R-Pu	Showy, persistent fruit; less aphid prone.
	M-H	S-PSh	W/5-6	R	R-Pu	Showy, persistent fruit, less aphid prone.

<sup>a</sup> Soil moisture: L=Low M=Medium H=High

<sup>b</sup> Exposure: S=Sun PSh=Partial shade Sh=Shade

<sup>c</sup> Flower color: Bl=Blue G=Green L=Lavender P=Pink Pu=Purple R=Red W=White Y=Yellow  
V=varies with cultivar NI=Not Important

Months numbered 1 - 12

<sup>d</sup> Fruit: B=Black Bl=Blue O=Orange P=Pink Pu=Purple R=Red W=White Y=Yellow  
NI=Not Important

<sup>e</sup> Fall color: Br=Bronze O=Orange Pu=Purple R=Red Y=Yellow NI=Not Important