



TREES & SHRUBS

Deciduous Shrubs

no. 7.415

by R.A. Cox and J.E. Klett ¹

Quick Facts...

Shrubs are multiple-stem plants that grow from 2 to more than 20 feet high.

Use shrubs for screening, privacy, windbreaks, wildlife habitats, and 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.

**Colorado
State**
University
Cooperative
Extension

Putting Knowledge to Work

© Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension. 10/97.
Reviewed 11/01.
www.ext.colostate.edu

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 outdoor interest. Shrubs can visually anchor a building to a site, guide the line of sight toward or away from certain views, and bridge the space between lower-growing perennials and taller trees to give a sense of completion to a landscape design. Deciduous shrubs offer seasonal changes not found with evergreen shrubs.

Because of the range of heights available, pruning, and spacing possibilities, 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 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 want the plants 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*.

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

Plant Name	Soil		Flower Color ^c and Month	Fruit ^d	Fall Color ^e	Comments
	Moisture ^a	Exposure ^b				
SMALL SHRUBS (less than 4 feet high when mature)						
<i>Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea</i> Barberry, 'Crimson Pygmy'	L-M	S-PSH	NI	R	R-Pu	Reddish-purple 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>Hydrangea arborescens</i> Hydrangea 'Annabelle'	M-H	Sh-PSH	W/7-9	NI	NI	Large, showy flowers.
<i>Hypericum kalmianum</i> Hypericum (St.John's-wort) 'Hidcote'	L-M	S-PSH	Y/7-9	NI	O-Pu	Blue-green foliage; hardier.
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> 'Lodense' Privet, 'Lodense'	L-M	S-Sh	W/6-7	B	NI	Cut back to ground in fall. Dark green foliage held late.
<i>Lonicera</i> spp. Honeysuckle 'Emerald Mound'	M	S-Sh	W/5-6	R	NI	Mounded habit.
'Miniglobe'	M	S-Sh	W/5-6	R	NI	Hardy, compact.
'Clavey's Dwarf'	M	S-Sh	W/5-6	R	NI	Good hedge.
<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> Potentilla (shrubby cinquefoil) 'Abbotswood'	L-M	S-PSH	Y-W/6-9	NI	NI	Compact, rounded.
'Coronation Triumph'			W			Spreading.
'Gold Drop'			Bright Y			Upright.
'Jackmannii'			Golden Y			Compact.
'Katherine Dykes'			Deep Y			Upright.
<i>Ribes alpinum</i> Alpine currant	L-M	S-Sh	NI	NI	Y	Spreading. Good for hedge.
<i>Rhus aromatica</i> 'Grow-low' 'Grow-low' sumac	L-M	S-PSH	Y/3-4	R	R-Pu	Vigorous, widespreading.
<i>Spiraea x bumalda</i> Bumald spirea 'Anthony Waterer'	M-H	S-PSH	P-Pu/6-8	NI	Br-Pu	Spreading, flat-topped.
'Froebellii'			R-rose			
'Goldflame'			P		R-O	Slightly taller. Yellow-green foliage.
<i>Spiraea japonica</i> 'Little Princess' 'Little Princess' spirea	M	S-PSH	P/6-7	NI	Br	Delicate, mounded.
<i>Symphoricarpos x chenaultii</i> Hancock coralberry	M	S-PSH	NI	R-P	NI	Blue-green leaves; persistent fruit; lower growth.
<i>Viburnum lentago</i> Nannyberry viburnum	M	S-PSH	W/4-5	Bl	ROPu	Can be used as a small tree.
MEDIUM SHRUBS (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> Japanese barberry 'Rose Glow'	L-M	S-PSH	NI	R	O-R P-R	Spiny; hedges or barrier. Reddish-purple foliage.
<i>Buddleia davidii</i> Butterfly bush	M	S-PSH	R	NI	NI	Pink blotches on leaves. Cut back in late winter.
<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compacta' Dwarf burning bush	M	S-Sh	L/6-7	P/O	R	Slightly ridged twigs.
<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i> occasionally.	M	S-PSH	R/P/W/4	Y	NI	Spiny stems; large fruit only
<i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Isanti' 'Isanti' dogwood	M-H	S-PSH	Flowering quince	W	R-Pu	Red twigs; compact habit.
<i>Ligustrum x vicaryi</i> Golden vicary privet	M	S	W/5-6	NI	NI	May show winter dieback.
<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i> Russian sage	L	S	W/6-7	NI	NI	Very small, fine leaves; cut back to 6" in late winter.
<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i> 'Aureus' Golden mockorange	M-H	S	L-Pu/7-9	NI	NI	Yellow foliage all season.
<i>Prunus x cistena</i> Cistena plum (purpleleaf sand cherry)	M	S-PSH	W/5-6	B-Pu	Pu	Purple foliage all season.

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

Plant Name	Soil		Flower Color ^c and Month	Fruit ^d	Fall Color ^e	Comments
	Moisture ^a	Exposure ^b				
<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>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.
<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.
'Java Red'			P-R			Bronze-red foliage.
'Vanicek'			R			
LARGE SHRUBS (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 acutifolia</i> Peking cotoneaster	L-M	S-PSh	NI	B	R-O	Screening or hedge use.
<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.
<i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i> Beautybush	L-M	S-PSh	P/5-6	NI	Br	Shredding bark; coarse.
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> 'Cheyenne' Cheyenne privet	M	S-PSh	W/6-7	B	NI	If sheared, no flowers or fruit.
<i>Lonicera korolkowii</i> Blueleaf honeysuckle	L-M	S	P/5	R	NI	Resistant to aphids.
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i> Honeysuckle, Tatarian						
'Arnold Red'	L-M	S-PSh	R/5	R	NI	Some resistance to aphids.
<i>Philadelphus x virginialis</i> Mockorange	M-H	S-PSh	W/5-6	NI	NI	Fragrant flowers; coarse.
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> Common ninebark	M	S	W/5-6	NI	Y-O	Shreddy bark; adaptable.
'Dart's Golden'						Yellowish-green foliage.
'Luteus'						Golden yellow foliage.

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

Plant Name	Soil		Flower Color ^c		Fall		Comments
	Moisture ^a	Exposure ^b	and Month	Fruit ^d	Color ^e		
<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 'Shubert' (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)	M	S-PSH	NI	R-B	Y	Thornless; vertical habit.	
<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; poor soil; deeply cut leaves.	
<i>Salix discolor</i> Pussywillow	H	S	Gray/3-4	NI	NI	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>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' 'Minuet'	M	S	Bl-L-P-Pu/5-6 P Pu	NI	Y	Blooms later. Upright growth habit. Slightly smaller shrub.	
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> Common lilac (includes "French hybrids") 'Charles Joly' 'President Grevy'	M	S	V/5 R-Pu Lt Bl	NI	NI	Prone to powdery mildew. 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.	
<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' viburnum	M	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI R-B	Pu-Br	Showier flowers; aphid prone; no fruit. Leathery leaves persist.	
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i> American cranberrybush viburnum	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	R	R-Pu	Showy, persistent fruit; less aphid prone.	

^a Soil moisture:	L=Low	M=Medium	H=High					
^b Exposure:	S=Sun	PSH=Partial shade	Sh=Shade					
^c 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							
^d Fruit:	B=Black	Bl=Blue	O=Orange	P=Pink	Pu=Purple	R=Red	W=White	Y=Yellow
	NI=Not Important							
^e Fall color:	Br=Bronze	O=Orange	Pu=Purple	R=Red	Y=Yellow	NI=Not Important		

¹R.A. Cox, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension horticulture agent, Jefferson County; and J.E. Klett, Cooperative Extension horticulture specialist, horticulture and landscape architecture.

Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Colorado counties cooperating. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. No endorsement of products mentioned is intended nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned.