

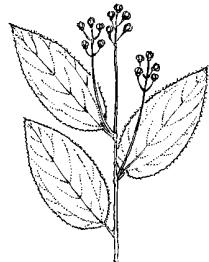


Native Shrubs for Backyard Biodiversity

Prepared by the Healthy Lawn and Garden Program

SOCRRRA, Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority

3910 W. Webster, Royal Oak, MI 48073, 248-288-5150 www.socrra.org or www.socwa.org



New Jersey Tea



Native Shrubs as Part of Our Landscape Heritage

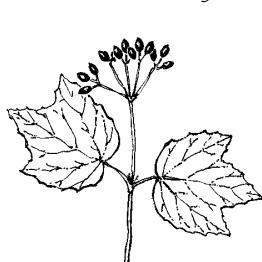
A shrub is a woody plant that branches at the base and is typically less than 25 feet in height.

Native shrubs, by definition, are plants that existed in the Great Lakes region prior to the arrival of European settlers. They contribute to the rich and productive relationships among plants, animals, insects and microorganisms in natural ecosystems such as woodlands, prairies, and wetlands.

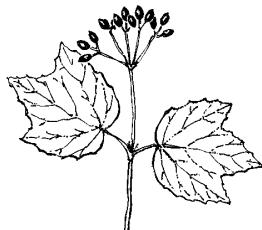
Ecological Benefits

Native shrubs contribute to the natural environment in important ways:

- **Natural vigor:** When properly planted, native shrubs adapt well to the variable weather conditions of Southeast Michigan.
- **Resistance to pests and diseases:** Once established, native shrubs are often resistant to pests and diseases, reducing the need for pesticides.
- **Habitat for birds, insects, and other beneficial wildlife:** Native plant communities provide food, shelter and hiding places for birds, butterflies, insects and other beneficial wildlife.
- **Water quality enhancement through soil stabilization:** Some native shrubs (especially pioneer species) colonize disturbed habitats, holding soil in place and protecting soil from excessive drying. Shrubs absorb nutrients which might otherwise run off into waterways and provide suitable conditions for other plants – including the next generation of trees.
- **Reduction in fertilizer use:** When soils are enriched with compost or other types of organic matter, additional fertilizer may not be needed. Rather than guessing, test your soil for nutrients. For Michigan State University soil testing, telephone Oakland County MSU Extension at 248-858-0895.



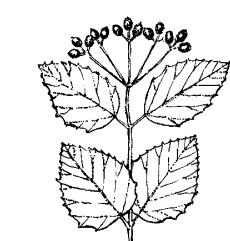
Black Chokeberry



Mapleleaf Viburnum



Spicebush

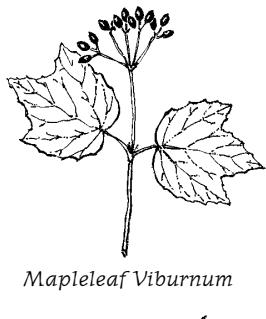


Arrowwood Viburnum

Shrubs – The “Forgotten Layer” of the Natural Garden

The shrub layer is an essential link between the herbaceous plants (flowers and ground-covers) and trees – but is frequently overlooked. This “forgotten layer” can provide a wide range of landscape benefits to the homeowner: biodiversity, hedge screening, shelter for beneficial wildlife, and beauty.

Natural systems are layered – so a garden modeled on nature should be designed and planted in layers as well. Together with trees, shrubs provide the structure or “bones” for a garden, contributing to garden design and ecological character.

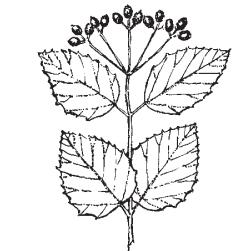
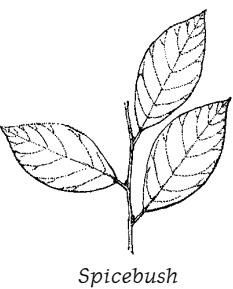


Why Not a Biohedge?

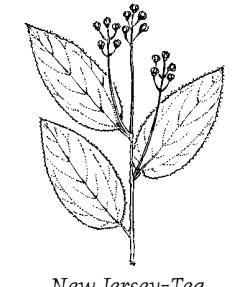
Native shrubs can help frame the home landscape - creating and defining outdoor spaces. Shrubs can be used to provide privacy, create a sense of enclosure, screen unwanted views, and serve as a backdrop for showcasing other plants.

A "biohedge" is created when shrubs with varying flowering and fruiting habits are clustered together. Biohedges create habitat for birds and beneficial insects, and add an additional dimension of diversity to the home garden. A biohedge can be designed to display flowers in the spring and summer, fruits in the summer and fall, and nuts and seed pods in the fall.

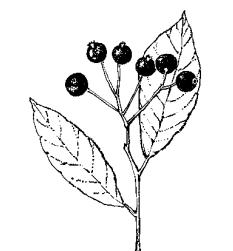
The native shrubs listed below are favorites for small and moderate-sized home landscapes in Southeast Michigan. When selecting shrubs, always start with the site conditions. First observe sun/shade, drainage, soil pH, and soil texture. Then review your plant choices. Some native shrubs may be available at local nurseries, or you may purchase shrubs from one of the native plant nurseries in the Midwest.



Arrowwood Viburnum



New Jersey-Tea



Black Chokeberry

Favorite Native Shrubs for Home Landscapes in Southeast Michigan

Alternate-leaved Dogwood (<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>)	Common Winterberry ...also called Michigan Holly (<i>Ilex verticillata</i>)	New Jersey Tea (<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>)
American Cranberrybush Viburnum (<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>)	Common Witch-Hazel (<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>)	Ninebark (<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>)
Arrowwood Viburnum (<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>)	Fragrant Sumac (<i>Rhus aromatica</i>)	Redosier Dogwood (<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>)
Black Chokeberry (<i>Aronia prunifolia</i>)	Mapleleaf Viburnum (<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>)	Spicebush (<i>Lindera benzoin</i>)
Buttonbush (<i>Cephaelanthus occidentalis</i>)	Meadowsweet (<i>Spiraea alba</i>)	Shrubby Cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>)
Common Elderberry (<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>)	Nannyberry (<i>Viburnum lentago</i>)	Shrubby St. John's-Wort (<i>Hypericum prolificum</i>)

Planting and Maintaining Native Shrubs

Once established, native shrubs are usually easy to maintain – but some annual maintenance is important for plant health, vigor, and beauty. Consider these maintenance tips:

- **Consider the height and width of the mature shrub:** Leave space between young shrubs, taking into account future growth.
- **Prune annually:** Slow-growing shrubs will require only occasional pruning for health and appearance. Remove dead and diseased wood and thin branches. Prune to enhance the natural shape and form of the shrub, as needed.
- **Use compost as a top dressing:** Add compost around the base of the shrub and under branches. The compost serves as a slow-release fertilizer and helps keep soils healthy.
- **Natural mulches:** Natural mulches such as shredded leaves, dry grass clippings, aged wood chips, and shredded bark help protect soil, hold moisture, and minimize weeds. Apply in a 2 - 3 inch layer around the shrub, making sure that water and air can still reach the soil and plant roots.