

Edge of Woodland Gardening with Shrubs Native to Minnesota

Many of us are looking for ways to create beautiful “woodland” or “shade” gardens that are more harmonious with our natural Minnesota environment. One of the most harmonious ways is to design with nature. This design concept leads us to study woodlands and especially, the edge of woodlands. It is at the edge of our various woodland plant communities that we find the highest frequency and variety of native shrubs. We study the arrangement of plants, structure, textures, and colors of the edge of natural woodlands and abstract them



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- ✓ Native shrubs often require minimum amounts of pesticides, fertilizers or watering if they are planted in the proper soils. Consult your nursery professional to choose the right plant for the right place.

into new planting principles for beautiful gardens in our residential yards, civic spaces, and parks.

The edge of woodlands is the outer periphery of woodlands where there is more sunlight. Native shrubs associated with woodlands will thrive better in shade from trees when there is 5 to 50% crown cover. This shade can vary from diffused light, part shade to a half day of shade. It is always important to select plants based on their performance according to the conditions of your chosen garden site.

One way to create an edge of woodland garden is to select a native woodland plant community “theme”. For example, you may select a Maple-Basswood forest or Oak-Hickory forest. Remnants of these various woodland communities still exist in the Twin City Metropolitan Area. Generally, it is best to select a plant community which best suits your site conditions. Your county or Department of Natural Resources may have

historical vegetation maps of your area. These native vegetation maps will help you build a plant list for your plant community theme.

Another method of creating edge of woodland gardens with native shrubs is done using formal arrangements of plants in the English Picturesque Style. This style simplifies the edge of woodlands into bold and stately arrangements of textures and color.

One of the most popular types of gardening at the edge of woodlands is for attracting songbirds. Many of the native shrubs that produce seeds, small nuts, and berries are used. For example, the Amelanchier spp., Prunus spp., and Viburnum spp. are excellent for attracting birds.

Site conditions to consider before planting are soil types, soil pH, water drainage, depth to bedrock, depth to water table, sunlight and shade, existing vegetation, irrigated or not irrigated, etc. If there are a lot of deer on your site, use Ribes spp., Viburnum spp., and Sambucus spp.

The native shrub list provided includes plants which are commonly found in the variety of edge of woodland communities in Minnesota. Also, good wildlife value and aesthetic plant characteristics were considered.

Name		Ht.	Flower	Soil	Fall Color
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Small

<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursa</i>	Bearberry	6"	Pink	D	Maroon
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey Tea	2-3'	White	M-D	Green
<i>Clematis virginiana</i>	Virgin's Bower	Vine	Cream	M	
<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	Bunchberry	6-9"	White	M	Red
<i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>	Wintergreen	6-24"	Pink	M	Maroon
<i>Lonicera prolifera</i>	Yellow Vine Honeysuckle	Vine	Yellow	M	Yellow-green
<i>Rosa caroliniana</i>	Pasture Rose	2-3'	Pink	M-D	Red
<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	Wood's Rose	2-3'	Pink	M-D	Red

Medium

<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	Sand Serviceberry	3-6'	White	M-D	Yellow
<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Black Chokeberry	4-6'	White	W-M	Red
<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>	Bush Honeysuckle	3-4'	Yellow	M-D	Bronze
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Winterberry	6-8'	White	W-M	Brown
<i>Ribes americanum</i>	Black Currant	3-5'	White	M	
<i>Ribes cynosbati</i>	Pasture Gooseberry	3-6'	White	M-D	Yellow-purple
<i>Ribes missouriensis</i>	Missouri Gooseberry	3-6'	White	M-D	Yellow-purple
<i>Rubus ideus canadensis</i>	Northern Raspberry	3-6'	White	M	Green-red
<i>Rubus occidentalis</i>	Black Raspberry	3-6'	White	M	Green-red
<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	Thimbleberry	3-4'	White	M	Green
<i>Symphoricarpos alba</i>	White Snowberry	3-4'	Pink	M	Blue-green

Large

<i>Acer spicatum</i>	Mountain Maple	15-20'		M	Orange-red
<i>Alnus rugosa</i>	Speckled Alder	15-20'	Catkin	W-M	Yellow-brown
<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Saskatoon Serviceberry	8-12'	White	M	Orange
<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Downy Serviceberry	15-20'	White	M-D	Yellow
<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Allegheny Serviceberry	15-20'	White	M	Yellow-orange
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	6-12'	White	W-M	Yellow-brown
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Pagoda Dogwood	15-20'	White	M	Plum-red
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Gray Dogwood	6-12'	White	M-D	Orange-red
<i>Corylus americana</i>	Hazelnut	6-12'	Catkin	M-D	Orange-red
<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	Beaked Filbert	6-12'	Catkin	M-D	Yellow
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Witch Hazel	15-20'	Yellow	M	Yellow
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Chokecherry	15-20'	White	M	Yellow-orange
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Elderberry	8-10'	White	W-M	Yellow-green
<i>Staphylea triflorata</i>	Bladdernut	8-12'	White	M	Orange-red
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Nannyberry	12-15'	White	M	Maroon-red
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	Highbush Cranberry	10-12'	White	M	Maroon-red

