



TREES & SHRUBS

Deciduous shrubs for Colorado

no. 7.415

by R.A. Cox and J.E. Klett¹

Quick facts...

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

Use shrubs for screening, privacy, wind breaks, wildlife habitats, and landscape color/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 represents shrubs intended for elevations below 6,000 feet and are widely available in garden centers and nurseries.

Shrubs receive immediate notice 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 provide the advantage of seasonal change 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 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 totally 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 7.407, *Shrubs for mountain communities*. More drought tolerant shrubs are listed in fact sheet 7.229, *Xeriscaping: trees and shrubs*.

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

Common Name <i>Scientific Name</i>	Soil Moisture ^a	Exposure ^b	Flower Color ^c and Month	Fruit ^d	Fall Color ^e	Comments
SMALL SHRUBS (less than 4 feet high when mature)						
Barberry, 'Crimson Pygmy' <i>Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea</i> 'Crimson Pygmy'	L-M	S-PSH	NI	R	R-Pu	reddish-purple foliage
Coralberry, 'Hancock' <i>Symphoricarpos x chenaultii</i> 'Hancock'	M	S-PSH	NI	R-P	NI	blue-green leaves, persistent fruit, lower growth
Cotoneaster, Cranberry <i>Cotoneaster apiculatus</i>	M	S-PSH	P/5	R	R	mounded habit
Currant, Alpine <i>Ribes alpinum</i>	L-M	S-Sh	NI	NI	Y	good for hedge
Dogwood, Kelsey <i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Kelseyi'	H	S-PSH	NI	NI	R-Pu	mounded; red stems
Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera</i> spp. '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
Hydrangea <i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> 'Annabelle'	M-H	Sh-PSH	W/7-9	NI	NI	large showy flowers
Hypericum (St. John's-wort) <i>Hypericum kalmianum</i> 'Hidcote'	L-M M	S-PSH S-PSH	Y/7-9 Y/7-9	NI NI	O-Pu NI	blue-green foliage, hardier cut back to ground in fall
Potentilla (Shrubby Cinquefoil) <i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> 'Abbotswood' 'Coronation Triumph' 'Gold Drop' 'Jackmannii' 'Katherine Dykes'	L-M	S-PSH	Y-W/6-9 W bright, Y golden Y deep Y light Y	NI	NI	compact, rounded spreading upright compact upright spreading
Privet, 'Lodense' <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> 'Lodense'	L-M	S-Sh	W/6-7	B	NI	dark green foliage held late
Spirea, Blue Mist <i>Caryopteris</i> spp.	L-M	S-PSH	Bl-P/7-9	Tan	NI	cut back in late winter
Spirea, Bumald <i>Spiraea x bumalda</i> 'Anthony Waterer' 'Froebellii' 'Goldflame'	M-H	S-PSH	P-Pu/6-8 R-rose P P	NI	Br-Pu R-O	spreading, flat-topped slightly taller yellow-green foliage
Spirea, 'Little Princess' <i>Spiraea japonica</i> 'Little Princess'	M	S-PSH	P/6-7	NI	Br	delicate, mounded
Sumac, 'Grow-low' <i>Rhus aromatica</i> 'Grow-low'	L-M	S-PSH	Y/3-4	R	R-Pu	vigorous, widespreading
MEDIUM SHRUBS (4-6 feet high when mature)						
Almond, dwarf flowering <i>Prunus glandulosa</i> 'Alba' 'Rosea Plena'	M	S	P/4-5 W P	NI	NI	flowers precede leaves single flowers double flowers
Barberry, Japanese <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> <i>Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea</i> 'Rose Glow'	L-M	S-PSH	NI R	R	O-R P-R	spiny; hedges or barrier reddish-purple foliage pink blotches on leaves
Burning Bush, dwarf <i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compacta'	M	S-Sh	NI	P/O	R	slightly ridged twigs
Butterfly Bush <i>Buddleia davidii</i>	M	S-PSH	L/6-7	NI	NI	cut back in late winter
Chokeberry, Black <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	B	O-R	glossy green foliage
Cistena Plum (Purpleleaf sand cherry) <i>Prunus x cistena</i>	M	S-PSH	P/5-6	B-Pu	Pu	purple foliage all season
Currant, Golden <i>Ribes aureum</i>	L-M	S-PSH	Y/4-5	B	R-Pu	native; fragrant flowers
Dogwood, 'Isanti' <i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Isanti'	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	W	R-Pu	red twigs, compact habit

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Lilac, dwarf Korean <i>Syringa meyeri</i> 'Palibin'	L-M	S-PSH	L-P/5-6	NI	NI	rounded, dense habit
Lilac, Miss Kim <i>Syringa patula</i> 'Miss Kim'	L-M	S	Bl-L/5-6	NI	R-Pu	rounded, dense habit
Mockorange, Golden <i>Philadelphus coronarius</i> 'Aureus'	M-H	S	W/5-6	NI	NI	yellow foliage all season
Privet, Golden Vicary <i>Ligustrum x vicaryi</i>	M	S	W/6-7	NI	NI	may show winter dieback
Quince, Flowering <i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i>	M	S-PSH	R/P/W/4	Y	NI	spiny stems, large fruit only occasionally
Sage, Russian <i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	L	S	L-Pu/7-9	NI	NI	very small, fine leaves; cut back to 6" late winter
Snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	L-M	S-PSH	P-W/6-7	W	NI	very adaptable
Spirea, Vanhoutte <i>Spiraea x vanhouttei</i>	L-M	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI	Br	graceful, arching habit
Sumac, Threelobe (skunkbush) <i>Rhus trilobata</i>	L	S-PSH	Y/4	R	Y-O-R	native; pungent foliage
Viburnum, Compact American Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum trilobum</i> 'Compactum'	M-H	S-PSH	NI	NI	R	dense, rounded
Viburnum, Compact European Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Compactum'	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	R	NI	showy, persistent fruit
Willow, Dwarf arctic <i>Salix purpurea nana</i>	M-H	S-PSH	NI	NI	NI	fine texture; needs winter moisture
Weigela <i>Weigela florida</i> 'Java Red' 'Vanicek'	M	S-PSH	P/5-6 P-R R	NI	NI	trumpet-shaped flower bronze-red foliage
LARGE SHRUBS (greater than 6 feet tall when mature)						
Beautybush <i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i>	L-M	S-PSH	P/5-6	NI	Br	shredding bark; coarse
Buckthorn, Columnar (Tallhedge) <i>Rhamnus frangula</i> 'Columnaris'	M	S-PSH	NI	R-B	Y	thornless; vertical habit
Burning Bush (Winged Euonymus) <i>Euonymus alatus</i>	M	S-Sh	NI	P/R/O	R	winged stems; pink fruit
Cherry, Nanking (Manchu) <i>Prunus tomentosa</i>	L-M	S-PSH	P-W/4	R	Y	edible fruit attracts birds
Chokecherry, Common <i>Prunus virginiana</i> 'Shubert'(Canada Red Cherry)	M	S-PSH	W/5	R-Pu	Y	suckering, attracts birds green leaves turn maroon
Cotoneaster, Peking <i>Cotoneaster acutifolia</i>	L-M	S-PSH	NI	B	R-O	screening or hedge use
Dogwood, Redtwig <i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Baileyi' 'Flaviramea' (Yellowtwig)	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	W-BI W-BI W-BI	R-Pu	red stems in winter red stems in winter yellow stems in winter
Elder, Golden <i>Sambucus canadensis</i> 'Aurea'	M-H	S	W/6-7	R-B	NI	golden leaves, edible frt.
Forsythia <i>Forsythia</i> spp. 'Meadowlark' 'Northern Gold' 'Northern Sun'	M	S	Y/3-4	NI	Y-Pu	hardy flower buds smaller; flower buds hardy flower buds hardy
Honeysuckle, Blueleaf <i>Lonicera korolkowii</i>	L-M	S	P/5	R	NI	resistant to aphids
Honeysuckle, Tatarian <i>Lonicera tatarica</i> 'Arnold Red'	L-M	S-PSH	R/5	R	NI	some resistance to aphids
Hydrangea, PG (PeeGee) <i>Hydrangea paniculata</i> 'Grandiflora'	M-H	S-PSH	W/7-8	NI	NI	large flower clusters
Lilac, Canada <i>Syringa x prestoniae</i> 'James McFarlane' 'Minuet'	M	S	Bl-L P-Pu/5-6 P Pu	NI	Y	blooms later upright growth habit slightly smaller shrub
Lilac, Chinese <i>Syringa x chinensis</i>	M	S	Pu/5	NI	Y	small leaves, loose flowers

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Lilac, Common (incl. "French Hybrids") <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> 'Charles Joly' 'President Grevy'	M	S	V/5 R-Pu Lt Bl	NI	NI	powdery mildew prone double flowers double flowers
Mockorange <i>Philadelphus x virginialis</i>	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	NI	NI	fragrant flowers; coarse
Ninebark, Common <i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> 'Dart's Golden' 'Luteus'	M	S	W/5-6	NI	Y-O	shreddy bark, adaptable yellowish-green foliage golden yellow foliage
Peashrub, Siberian <i>Caragana arborescens</i>	L	S	Y/5	NI	Y	very adaptable
Plum, Double Flowering <i>Prunus triloba</i>	M	S-PSH	P/4	NI	NI	double pink flowers
Privet, Cheyenne <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> 'Cheyenne'	M	S-PSH	W/6-7	B	NI	If sheared, no flowers or fruit
Rose-of-Sharon (Shrub althaea) <i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	M	S-PSH	V/7-8	NI	NI	showy late flowers
Serviceberry (Juneberry) <i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	M	S-PSH	W/4-5	R-Pu	YOR	shrub or small tree
Smoketree <i>Cotinus coggygia</i> 'Royal Purple' 'Nordine'	M	S-PSH	P-W/7	NI	Pu -O	flowers like "pink smoke" purple leaves; less hardy purple leaves; hardier
Spindletree (European Euonymus) <i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	M	S-Sh	NI	R-Pu/O	R-Pu	shrub or small tree
Spirea, Ash-leaf (Ural false-spirea) <i>Sorbaria sorbifolia</i>	M	S-PSH	W/6-7	NI	NI	lush foliage; suckering
Sumac, Smooth <i>Rhus glabra</i>	L-M	S-PSH	G-Y/5-6	R	R-O	suckers, best in poor soil
Sumac, Staghorn <i>Rhus typhina</i> 'Laciniata'	L-M	S-PSH	G-Y/5-6	R	R-O	larger, suckers, poor soil deeply cut leaves leathery leaves persist
Viburnum, Alleghany <i>Viburnum x rhytidophylloides</i> 'Alleghany'	M	S-PSH	W/5-6	R-B	Pu-Br	
Viburnum, American Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	R	R-Pu	showy persistent fruit; less aphid prone
Viburnum, Burkwood <i>Viburnum x burkwoodii</i>	M	S-PSH	P-W/4-5	R-B	NI	leathery leaves persist
Viburnum, European Cranberrybush <i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Roseum' (Snowball)	M-H	S-PSH	W/5-6	R NI	R-Pu	fruit persists; aphid prone showier flowers; aphid prone, no fruit
Viburnum, Nannyberry <i>Viburnum lentago</i>	M	S-PSH	W/4-5	Bl	ROPu	can be used as a small tree
Viburnum, Wayfaring tree <i>Viburnum lantana</i> 'Mohican'	L-M	S-PSH	W/4-5	R-B	Pu-Br	leathery leaves persist more compact form
Willow, Pussy <i>Salix discolor</i>	H	S	Gray/3-4	NI	NI	early catkins (flowers), very susceptible to canker

a L=Low M=Medium H=High

b S=Sun PSH=Partial shade Sh=Shade

c 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 B=Black Bl=Blue O=Orange P=Pink Pu=Purple R=Red W=White Y=Yellow NI=Not Important

e Br=Bronze O=Orange Pu=Purple R=Red Y=Yellow NI=Not Important

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