**Native Plants for Screening**

**A Living Screen, Fence, or Hedge** is introduced into the landscape to block an object from view, create privacy, deter sound, serve as a windbreak, or to simply create a border. A **living screen** is often made up of plants which are evergreen or deciduous and will vary in size depending on the shrubs or trees selected. It can reduce your mowing area, provide food and cover for wildlife, and offer a beautiful mixture of textures and shapes that change with every season.

**Create a natural looking Living Screen, Fence, or Hedge**

Nature rarely plants a straight row of the same kind of plants. Look at the assorted heights and shapes of plants, and how they are staggered, in nature. To create a more natural look, use a mix of plants, two or three plants deep, staggered to create a thicket. A curved edge creates a more natural look. Two other tricks for achieving a more natural look are (1) to merge the hedge to a nearby existing landscape feature such as a tree, water source, rock outcrop, woodland habitat or neighboring hedge and (2) to add transitional layers with shorter native herbaceous plants in front, graduating to medium-height shrubs, and taller ones or trees. A screen or hedgerow comprised of a mix of native shrubs will be alive with birds and pollinators. Native shrubs **increase biodiversity.** Closely planted, the native plants of our area provide shelter and nesting places for birds. A screen that consists of different native plants hosts a variety of butterfly and moth (Lepidoptera) caterpillars, a critical protein-rich food for adult birds to feed to their young, and may provide food, shelter, and nesting sites for birds and other wildlife.

For a natural looking hedge that supports wildlife

* Use a variety of native shrubs that flower and fruit at different times of the year.
* Include a few evergreens to provide winter shelter for birds.
* Layer native perennials and shrubs (shorter plants in front, taller ones in the back) to blend into the woods and provide welcoming bird habitat.
* Avoid the use of pesticides.
* Choose plants appropriate for our area and the growing conditions at the site (sun, part shade, shade; dry, moist, wet).
* Let the leaves be! Unnecessary leaf raking, especially in spring and fall, disturbs species that overwinter in the protective, insulating leaf litter. Leaf litter creates the right environment for many insects, toads, and salamanders. Leaves are a natural mulch and return nutrients to the soil as they decay.
* Avoid unnecessary pruning or trimming, especially during spring through mid-summer when you are likely to disturb nesting birds.

**A short list of deer-resistant native plants for screening (see spreadsheet for a complete list)**

**Depending on the space, choose 3 to 5 species. Stagger the plantings in two to three uneven ‘rows’, shorter plants in front and taller ones in the back. Merge the hedge to the existing landscape.**

**For the front**

Spiraea alba (white meadowsweet) - deciduous, 3 to 6 ft. tall, blooms white June to September

Ilex glabra (inkberry)\*

Clethra alnifolia (summersweet or sweet pepperbush)\* fragrant, moist, forms thicket

Cornus sericea (Red osier dogwood)\* (silky dogwood)

Rhus aromatic (Fragrant sumac)\*

**In the middle**

Calycanthus floridus (Eastern sweetshrub) fragrant, suckers

Kalmia latifolia (mountain laurel)

Myrica pensylvanica (formerly Morella pensylvanica Northern bayberry)\*

Viburnum opulus var. americanum (American cranberry bush)

*Corylus* American Hazelnut\* edible nut, food source for wildlife

*Sambucus canadensis (*Elderberry)\*

Chokecherry

Blueberry (highbush and lowbush)

*Hamamelis virginiana* (witchhazel)\* blooms in November

**Toward the back**

Ilex opaca (American holly)\*

Juniperus virginiana (eastern red cedar)\* - evergreen, 30 to 40 ft. tall, low water use, sun, part shade, shade

Thuja occidentalis (arborvitae) - evergreen, 30 to 40 ft. tall, medium water use, sun, part shade, shade

Tsuga canadensis (eastern hemlock)

Crataegus opaca (river flat hawthorn)

Crataegus uniflora (dwarf hawthorn)

***Remember to leave space between each plant as the plants will grow!***

About the Shrubs and small trees Spreadsheet

Information should be cross-referenced with other sources.

Do not consume fruits and berries without confirming they are safe for humans to eat. Some fruits and berries that are eaten by wildlife are poisonous to humans.

Sources of information:

National Wildlife Federation

Audubon