

YardSmart Trees & Shrubs

Add colour, texture and interest to your yard, and attract birds and bees by adding trees and shrubs that thrive in Calgary.



Nanking Cherry

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“Trees and shrubs offer so much colour, texture and interest and attract birds and bees.” – Kath Smyth

Kath’s trees and shrubs top picks

Certified horticulturist and fifth generation Albertan, Kath Smyth is passionate about helping Calgarians create beautiful yards that are easy on the wallet as well as the environment. She credits her mother and grandfather for inspiring her gardening passion. “They both loved gardening and had fabulous yards. Watching them, I learned what worked and didn’t work when it comes to growing in the prairies.”

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Working in local gardens, Kath has identified her favourite trees and shrubs that thrive, with limited water, in Calgary’s short growing season.

“Trees and shrubs add so much to a yard. They offer so much colour, texture and interest and attract birds and bees. What people like the most about trees and shrubs is that they are generally much less maintenance than a lawn or annuals and perennial flowers.”

Kath’s top shrub picks

Diabolo Ninebark – *Physocarpus opulifolius ‘Monlo’*



This North American native has beautiful purple foliage that looks terrific in any garden and can make an excellent large, informal hedge. It’s a fast growing shrub that stands up to heat, drought and winter cold. Clusters of white flowers in early summer draw butterflies. In the winter, the peeling bark is attractive. It’s usually ignored by deer and rabbits. Plant in full sun to part shade.

Size: Eight feet tall and eight feet wide.

Red Leaf Rose – *Rosa glauca*



The main attraction of this shrub is its gorgeous gray-purple foliage. It provides single pink blooms that appear for a few weeks in late spring and later it has beautiful orange-red hips on red-green branches that attract birds. It enjoys full sun, but will also do well in part shade where its leaves develop more of a silvery, gray-green colouring.

Size: Six feet tall and five feet wide.

‘Rose Glow’ Barberry – *Berberis thunbergii ‘Rose Glow’*



This bush has purple foliage liberally splashed with pink and white. In the fall, leaves turn reddish orange and spikes of red berries appear like highlights as the leaves fall. It makes a good hedge or barrier (very thorny). It enjoys full sun and is drought tolerant and deer resistant.

Size: Five feet tall and four feet wide.

Ivory Halo Dogwood – *Cornus alba ‘Bailhalo’*



This round shrub offers great year-round interest. It has variegated green and white foliage along with yellowish blooms in spring followed by blue-grey ornamental berries. In the fall, the foliage turns purple-red and then red twigs stand out in the winter. Young stems have the best colour; pruning out the oldest stems every three years keeps this shrub vivid. Plant in full sun to part shade.

Size: Five feet tall and five feet wide.

Dwarf Korean Lilac – *Syringa meyeri ‘Palibin’*



This is a compact lilac that is good for small spaces and hedges. Plant in full sun to part shade.

Size: Four feet high and four feet wide.

Goldflame Spirea – *Spiraea x bumalda* ‘Goldflame’



This is a popular shrub for good reason. It has an excellent round form. Its foliage and flowers offer a variety of colours in the growing season. Young stems have the best colour; prune out some of the oldest stems every two years. Plant in full sun to part shade.

Size: Three feet tall and three feet wide.

Nanking Cherry – *Prunus tomentosa*



This is a delight in spring when light pink to white blooms appear along its branches. It produces small, sweet-tart red cherries (used for preserves) in late summer. It prefers well-drained soil and full sun. It looks great as a stand-alone bush in your garden.

Size: Six feet high and six feet wide.

Turkestan Burning Bush – *Euonymus nana* ‘Turkestanica’



Small, yellow flowers in spring attract pollinators. Green foliage turns brilliant red in autumn and the bark provides excellent winter interest. It enjoys full sun.

Size: Four feet tall and four feet wide.

Sem False Spirea – *Sorbaria sorbifolia* ‘Sem’



This is a dense bush with pink stripes on bronze fern-like leaves in spring and impressive white flower plumes in summer. Its fall foliage is bright red and orange. Plant in full sun to part shade.

Size: Four feet high and four feet wide.

Clavey’s Dwarf Honeysuckle – *Lonicera x xylosteoides* ‘Claveyi’



People love this ball-shaped bush. The red berries are a wonderful food source for robins. It has a compact, rounded form with grey-green leaves with creamy white flowers that attract pollinators. Grow it in part shade or shade.

Size: Four feet tall and four feet wide.

Waterton Mock Orange – *Philadelphus lewisii* ‘Waterton’



This is an upright native shrub with arching branches that are stunning in June when they are covered in single, white fragrant blooms. It tolerates a variety of conditions including drought and shade.

Size: Six feet high and five feet wide.

Saskatoon Berry – *Amelanchier alnifolia*



This prairie classic is an upright shrub with white spring blooms. It produces plentiful sweet fruit and orange fall foliage. This shrub produces the most berries in full sun but can also grow in part shade. Best cultivars include ‘Honeywood’, ‘Martin’, ‘Northline’, ‘Smoky’ and ‘Thiessen.’

Size: Eight feet tall and six feet wide.

Bird’s Nest Spruce – *Picea abies nidiformis*



This is a unique accent plant with layered branches of short, dense, bright green needles. It has a neat, compact, low-maintenance form and requires well-drained soil. It tolerates salt and pollution and likes full sun or part shade.

Size: Three feet tall and three feet wide.

Goldfinger Potentilla – *Potentilla fruticosa* ‘Goldfinger’



This is a classic shrub that provides yellow blooms throughout summer. It prefers well-drained soil and does well in full sun or partial shade.

Size: Five feet high and three feet wide.

Calgary® Carpet Juniper – *Juniperus sabina* ‘Monna’



This juniper is an excellent groundcover providing low-spreading, layered branches of softly textured green foliage. It prefers full sun and is wind and drought tolerant once established. It’s recommended for slopes and if you need to control erosion in your yard.

Size: One foot high and five feet wide.

Savin Juniper – *Juniperus sabina*



This is an upright juniper option with vase-shaped, spreading branches of deep green foliage. It’s great for hedges. It’s wind tolerant and prefers well-drained soil.

Size: Three foot high and four feet wide.

Buffalo Juniper – *Juniperus sabina* ‘Buffalo’



This has low, spreading branches of bright green feathery foliage. It tolerates poor soil conditions, but it should be in a well-drained location. It’s drought tolerant once established.

Size: One foot high and five feet wide.

Kath's top tree picks

Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry

– *Amelanchier grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance'



This has branches that are covered with white spring blossoms. Its small, blue-green leaves turn brilliant red-orange in fall with the added bonus of small, showy purple black, sweet edible fruit. Full sun to part shade. This may require more watering than other trees listed.

Size: 20 feet high and 16 feet wide.

Snowbird Hawthorn – *Crataegus x mordenensis* 'Snowbird'



It has fragrant, double white spring blooms in the spring and small crimson ornamental fruit in fall. It prefers well-drained soil and full sun.

Size: 20 feet high and 10 feet wide.

Ure pear – *pyrus x ussuriensis* 'Ure' (also called Ussurian Pear)



Pears do grow in Calgary and this tree is proof. It's the hardiest pear tree with small yellow fruit. It has white spring blooms, long thorns and glossy green foliage turning orange in fall providing ornamental value. Plant in full sun.

Size: 20 feet high and 15 feet wide.

'Ivory Silk' Tree Lilac – *Syringa reticulata* 'Ivory Silk'



This is a non-suckering variety of lilac with a compact, oval shape that offers unique interest. This has beautiful creamy-white fragrant blooms on stems above dark green foliage in early July. Its yellow fall foliage and textured bark add seasonal interest. It does best in full sun.

Size: 20 feet high and 16 feet wide.

Siberian Larch – *Larix sibirica*



This is a unique tree with clusters of soft, green needles in spring that turn golden yellow before falling in autumn. It retains attractive cones over winter. Plant in sun to part shade.

Size: 20 feet high and 10 feet wide.

Amur Cherry – *Prunus maackii*



This tree provides interest starting with showy, white spring blooms and then small black cherries in fall. Dropping fruit can stain decks and sidewalks. The bronze bark on mature trees provides winter interest. Plant in full sun.

Size: 20 feet high and 20 feet wide.

Showy Mountain Ash – *Sorbus decora*



This is a slow-growing, compact, round tree with white bloom clusters in spring and red ornamental berries in fall – great for attracting birds. It requires well-drained soil and prefers full sun.

Size: 20 feet high and 16 feet wide.

Bristlecone Pine – *Pinus aristata*



This is an exceptionally long-living tree that is native to areas of North America. Grow it because you like its interesting appearance, slow growth and drought tolerance. It prefers full sun and well-drained soil.

Size: 15 feet high and six feet wide.

Rosthern crabapple – *Malus baccata* 'Rosthern'



This is a prairie hardy narrow, columnar tree that produces fragrant white flowers. New leaves are tinged bronze then turn green. Its small, yellow fruit attracts birds. Enjoys full sun.

Size: 15 feet high and 6 feet wide.

Montgomery Spruce – *Picea pungens* 'Montgomery'

This spruce has a beautiful silvery blue colour. Its dense rounded shape elongates as it matures. It's a good choice for small-space landscapes. It prefers full sun and well-drained soil.

Size: 12 feet high and five feet wide.

Combining the right flowers, trees and shrubs together can pack a powerful beauty punch. Check out our Perennials brochure for some great tips on plants and shrubs that look great together.

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