

For an approach to landscape design that will mean less work for you, consider the natural shapes of shrubs available in your part of the country.

Informal borders work best with *rounded forms*. Most mature plants in this group will spread up to six feet, so give them plenty of room when you plant to make pruning easier and faster.

Vertical lines characterize *erect* or *upright* forms, making them perfect accents. They can be used as narrow hedges but need careful pruning.

With graceful, fountain-like silhouettes, *arching shrubs* add a restful touch to the garden. Use them for shrub borders or specimen plants--or to highlight the ends of narrow hedges.

Large *spreading* types, with branches extending to provide horizontal lines, accent the architectural features of the home, making them useful as foreground plants.

However, for small gardens where you want a variety of plants, choose upright, medium-size plants, and not many sprawlers and spreaders.

These features--along with size and texture--can be used to adjust the proportions of a garden by making a short one appear longer or a long one shorter. Broad-leaved and bold plants in the front, with small-leaved, delicate ones farther away make the view seem longer. Light and bright colors advance or stand out, and dark colors seem to recede. So use light, bright foliage shrubs in the foreground--those with silver, bluish tinges, or yellow. Toward the back, use deeper tones--purples or deep greens--to give the illusion of space.

Arching branches.

Shrubs with an arching shape highlight a corner of your yard. In bloom, they're like a bridal bouquet.

Shrub	Height (in feet)	Flower colors
Arnold honeysuckle	8	red
Beautybush	15	pink
Border forsythia	10	yellow
Fountain butterfly bush	12	lilac
Lilac daphne	3	blue

Erect form.

Use erect forms to block a tall eyesore. They're good for small spaces.

Shrub	Height (in feet)	Flower colors
Hibiscus	10	various

Rounded forms.

Set rounded shrubs where space is not a problem, or be prepared to prune often.

Shrub	Height (in feet)	Flower colors
Dwarf winged euonymus	4	white
Flowering quince	6	various
Hydrangea varieties	4-9	various
Kerria	6	yellow
Persian lilac	10	lilac
Tatarian honeysuckle	10	pink-white
Weigela	10	red
Witch hazel	10	yellow

Spreading shrubs.

Spreading shrubs can make high walls appear to be lower. Such plants can also be combined with taller ones.

Shrub	Height (in feet)	Flower colors
Japanese quince	3	various
Dwarf ninebark	4	white
Fragrant viburnum	9	white
Morrow honeysuckle	8	white
Spreading cotoneaster	6	pinkish
Sargent crab apple	6	white
Staghorn sumac	20	greenish