

Placing shrubs is a little like putting together a jigsaw puzzle--both vertically and horizontally. But this puzzle is a challenge because you need to consider the size of the mature plant. What you see in the nursery may only be a youngster--perhaps a fifth of its mature size.

Shrubs can be fitted together with a little overlap here and there. Up-front plants dress up the edge, while background shrubs complete the picture. For best effect, use at least three of each kind of shrub you select for your landscape.

Shrubs should be set from a property line at least half their expected diameter at maturity. This allows your shrubs to grow to full size without spreading into a neighbor's yard or onto a sidewalk.

Foundation plantings should not be placed directly beneath the drip line of overhanging eaves. The centers of such shrubs are best at least six inches beyond the drip line. This will reduce the danger of ice or snow falling from the roof onto the shrubs and causing damage.

Shrubs can help shady spots be attractive parts of your landscape design. The north wall of the house, near trees or tall shrubs, and near separation walls are places leafy shrubs can fill.