

Maintaining Your Naturalized Shoreline

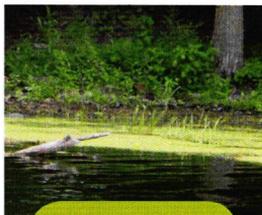
NATIVE PLANT CARE GUIDE



THE IMPORTANCE OF SHORELINE VEGETATION

Vegetation along shorelines of any body of water, including lakes, rivers, creeks, ponds, and wetlands, are buffer zones.

With changing land use and increased development along waterways, natural vegetation is often removed. With the loss of this vegetation, landowners often face undesirable consequences, including the overabundance of algae on surface water, loss of land due to erosion, or mess created by unwanted geese. These negative impacts can reduce the valuable aesthetic appeal and recreational opportunities of shoreline properties.



Overabundance of algae on surface water.



Loss of land due to erosion.



Mess created by unwanted geese.

To help landowners address these common concerns, Watersheds Canada partnered with organizations in several regions to deliver The Natural Edge Shoreline Naturalization Program. This program encourages and assists landowners in creating or re-establishing shoreline buffers of native vegetation on properties across Canada.

Shoreline buffers of native vegetation have several benefits for the environment and landowners. The ideal buffer width is at least 30 metres; however, any buffer is better than no buffer, and the bigger the buffer the better!

4. *Mitigating Flood Frequency and Impacts:* Buffers can help reduce flooding by slowing the velocity of surface runoff and allowing it to be absorbed into the ground. When water is absorbed into the ground, it becomes groundwater and enters the water body much slower than surface water. This reduces the amount of surface water draining directly into a water body, thereby lessening the potential for flooding overland, and allowing the water body to more easily regulate water levels naturally.

5. *Reducing Erosion:* Diverse shoreline vegetation creates a vast network of underground roots, which holds soil in place, stabilizing shorelines against slumping and washing away. While the roots hold soil in place underground, leaves aboveground reduce the flow and impact of rain and surface water on the soil surface, and also reduce the severity of wave action from water currents and boat wake along the shoreline.



6. *Maintaining or Increasing Property Values:* Natural shorelines can protect property values from decreasing due to loss of land, wind or water damage, and poor water quality. The appeal of waterfront views and access are important, but buffers can be created or maintained to keep sightlines and access points to the water, while also positively contributing to shoreline protection, wildlife habitat, and water quality.



WATERING

Your new shoreline vegetation should be watered for:



During the spring

April-June

During drought-like periods during the summer months



Trees and large shrubs require 20-30 litres (4-6 gallons) of water weekly.



Smaller shrubs require 10-20 litres (2-4 gallons) of water weekly.



Ground cover will only require watering when the soils are dry.



The best method for watering trees and shrubs is at the base of the trunk or main stems, early or late in the day. This will ensure water reaches the roots before evaporating from the surface, and will limit surface runoff. During times of considerable rain, weekly watering may not be necessary.

Summer watering is only required during periods of drought when all trees and shrubs should receive between 30-40 litres (6-8 gallons) of water weekly.

Observable signs of drought can include: small, yellow or brown leaves, drooping leaves, loss of crown leaves, and blistering or cracking bark.

PRUNING

Pruning is a technique used to help support the growth of trees and shrubs.

Most native shoreline vegetation will require little to no pruning at all. However, some pruning may be desirable to maintain sightlines or access to the water or to keep the plant healthy.



WHAT TO PRUNE

Branches that are dead, diseased, or damaged should be removed to protect the plant from further health risks. If necessary, branches can also be removed to thin a shrub if it has obstructed pathways or sightlines to the water. It can be helpful to observe a shrub or tree throughout all seasons to get a better idea of which branches to be removed without compromising the natural shape of the plant.

Some shrubs and trees produce suckering branches that emerge from underground roots near the trunk or base of the main stem of the plant. Some suckers can be desirable, as they aid in stabilizing and naturalizing a shoreline. However, some suckers can be undesirable or limit the nutrients reaching the canopy layer of the main shrub or tree and should be pruned to ensure the main plant does not die off.

HOW TO PRUNE

Pruning removes unwanted branches while protecting the trunk and other branches from damage or disease.

Proper pruning technique will ensure the survival and health of plants while minimizing susceptibility to fungal or insect infestation. Before pruning begins, the entire shrub or tree should be looked at to determine the right branches to trim. Cuts should be made on the branch that is to be removed at the branch collar. Pruning at the branch collar reduces the risk of unwanted damage and infestation, and allows for faster healing.

Tools and materials required to successfully prune shrubs and trees can include: pruning shears, a hand saw, step stool or ladder, gloves, eyewear protection, a bucket, and tool cleaning solution. Infection and disease can spread from plant to plant via pruning tools. Be sure to clean tools after every tree or shrub before starting on another one. Possible disinfecting solutions can include one part bleach, dish soap, or pine oil cleaner in three parts water.

To successfully prune shrubs and trees without tearing bark or splitting wood, and to limit infection or infestation, follow these steps:

1 Determine which branches to cut before starting to prune.

2 Make a wedge shape cut, roughly one-quarter of the branch diameter, on the underside of the branch, and approximately 12 cm (5 inches) from the branch collar. This wedge-cut is not intended to remove the branch.

3 Approximately 20-30 cm (8-12 inches) away from the branch collar, further than the wedge-cut, cut the branch completely, starting at the topside of the branch. This will leave a branch stub with the initial wedge cut.

4 Cut off the stub by cutting parallel to the branch collar. Do not cut the collar. Cutting the collar can damage the tree or shrub by increasing healing time and susceptibility to infection.

Species	Vegetation Type	Potential Pruning Requirements
Black Willow (<i>Salix nigra</i>)	Tree	Limited
Bracken Fern (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>)	Groundcover	None
Balsam Fir (<i>Abies balsamea</i>)	Tree	Limited
Bur Oak (<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>)	Tree	Limited; Suckers
Bunchberry (<i>Cornus canadensis</i>)	Groundcover	None
Buttonbush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>)	Shrub	Fall pruning; Complete rejuvenation
Chokecherry (<i>Prunus virginiana</i>)	Shrub	Fall pruning; Gradual rejuvenation
Christmas Fern (<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>)	Groundcover	None
Climbing Prairie Rose (<i>Rosa setigera</i>)	Shrub	Spring pruning; Complete rejuvenation
Common Polypody (<i>Polypodium virginianum</i>)	Groundcover	None
Eastern Red Cedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>)	Tree	Limited; Shape
Gray Dogwood (<i>Cornus racemosa</i>)	Shrub	Fall pruning; Complete rejuvenation
Hemlock (<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>)	Tree	Limited; Shape
Bush Honeysuckle (<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>)	Shrub	After flowering; Gradual rejuvenation
Eastern White Cedar (<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>)	Tree	Limited; Shape

Species	Vegetation Type	Potential Pruning Requirements
Winter Green (<i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>)	Ground Cover	None
Witch Hazel (<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>)	Shrub	After flowering; Gradual rejuvenation
Red Oak (<i>Quercus rubra</i>)	Tree	Limited; Suckers
Red Osier Dogwood (<i>Cornus sericea</i>)	Shrub	Fall pruning; Complete rejuvenation
Staghorn Sumac (<i>Rhus typhina</i>)	Shrub	Spring pruning; Gradual rejuvenation
Sweet Gale (<i>Myrica gale</i>)	Shrub	Fall pruning; Gradual rejuvenation
Tamarack (<i>Larix laricina</i>)	Tree	Limited; Shape
White Pine (<i>Pinus strobes</i>)	Tree	Limited; Shape
White Spruce (<i>Picea glauca</i>)	Tree	Limited; Shape
Wild Raisin (<i>Viburnum cassinoides</i>)	Shrub	Fall pruning; Gradual rejuvenation