



Designing and Planting a Native Hedgerow

This guide includes information on:

- **Site preparation**
- **Planting techniques**
- **Species selection**
- **Maintenance**

Did you know that there are

450

species of native bees in BC!



What is a hedgerow?

Hedgerows are linear groupings of species planted with shrubs, trees, and sometimes wildflowers. When many species are planted, there are blooms throughout the seasons (early spring - late summer).



Benefits to wildlife

Hedgerows provide shade, shelter, and food for many animals, such as birds. They also provide foraging opportunities for bees, butterflies, and other insects. Some shrubs are host plants for specific butterfly larvae.



Benefits to you

Hedgerows act as wind and visual barrier when located beside a sidewalk or road. They also provide services such as erosion prevention, drainage control, sound blockage, and habitat resources.



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Site Preparation

A hedgerow can often be installed with little preparation given that the area isn't dominated by aggressive non-native vegetation (e.g. Himalayan Blackberry). Here are a few options for removing existing undesirable plant material and preparing a site to reduce weeding in the future.



1. Cardboard and Mulch

You can begin by putting down 1-3 layers of cardboard: the number of layers depends on the thickness of the cardboard itself. Then add a thick layer (sheet) of mulch, 3-6 inches deep. The cardboard and mulch smothers the vegetation below and creates a weed-free barrier. The cardboard will break down over time into the soil.

2. Till and Mulch

If space allows, till along where the hedgerow is to be planted. Spread a generous layer (~6") of mulch to cover all tilled areas. The mulch layer protects the soil from erosion and insulates plant roots from the intense summer heat. Any weeds that penetrate this layer can be manually removed easily.

3. Mechanical Sod Removal

If an area is primarily sod, a sod cutter can sever the roots and is a fairly easy way to create an open planting bed without tilling. The area can then be covered in topsoil/mulch and planted.

4. Direct Planting (no site preparation)

A simple way to plant a hedgerow is to just integrate the plants directly into the existing vegetation without any amendments. Dig a hole through the grass, plant the shrub, and only mulch around planting. This method is best in areas with few aggressive weedy species and you've chosen vigorous fast-growing hedgerow species.



Planting Techniques

The best time to plant is early fall (September to November) or early Spring (February to March) when there is still time for plants to establish while the weather is relatively moist and cools before our dry summers.

August	September-October	February-March	July-September
Choose site and begin planning. What site preparation is needed?	Plant shrubs, trees, or other native perennials.	Supplementary plant if needed.	Water weekly in the driest months for the first few years during establishment.

Planting

To achieve good cover in a hedgerow planting, at least **one shrub/tree per square meter** is recommended. If you have chosen site preparation option 1, the cardboard and mulch technique, feel free to moisten the cardboard ahead of planting as it makes it easier to puncture through. Once you cut through and begin digging, keep the weedy soil below the cardboard and do not shovel onto your fresh mulch. After planting you should avoid agitating the soil as it brings weed seed to the surface.

Optional: Add a Wildflower Strip

If you have space in front of the hedgerow and would like to attract pollinators quickly, you can plant a row of hardy perennial wildflowers a few feet in front of your hedgerow. This spacing ensures the perennials don't out-compete slower-growing shrubs as they establish. The planting density we suggest for forbs is between **5 - 10 x 10cm pots per meter squared**. The range reflects the growing tendencies of the plant; rhizomatous evergreen species can be planted at a lower density than slow-growing geophytes (species that die back in the summer/winter).

Tall wildflowers that grow to shrub heights in the summer include Coastal Mugwort (*Artemisia suksdorfii*), Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), and Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium ssp. angustifolium*).

Species Selection

Native pollinators have co-evolved with native plants, which has led to integral relationships between specific plant species and insects/birds. These plants are called **host species**. An example includes Oceanspray, which is a host species for five native butterflies, including Lorquin's Admiral and some Swallowtails Butterfly.



Sample plant selection			
Full Sun/Part Shade and Dry/Mesic		Full Sun/Part Shade and Wet	
Oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	Red-osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i> ssp. <i>sericea</i>
Tall Oregon-grape	<i>Berberis aquifolium</i>	Black Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>
June Plum	<i>Oemleria cerasiformis</i>	Pacific Crabapple	<i>Malus fusca</i>
Mock Orange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	Pacific Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i>
Red-flowering Currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	Clustered Rose	<i>Rosa pisocarpa</i>
Nootka Rose	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Hardhack	<i>Spiraea douglasii</i>
Scouler's Willow	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>	Red Elderberry	<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>
Saskatoon	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>		
Kinnikinnick	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>		
Part Shade/Full Shade and Dry/Mesic		Part Shade/Full Shade and Wet	
Salal	<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	Salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>
Dull Oregon-grape	<i>Berberis nervosa</i>	Red Elderberry	<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>
Baldhip Rose	<i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>	Black Twinberry	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>



Maintenance

Pruning and Planting Upkeep

Intensive pruning is not necessary because they are designated to provide privacy as well as ample habitat. Therefore, maintenance of a native hedgerow can include cutting back dead material and selective pruning and re-mulching. Avoid cutting back or pruning in the spring and summer during bird nesting season. Feel free to leave some of the pruned material and other debris. This will provide food for birds and insects.

Weed Control

Some weeding is inevitable, but by planting densely, there should be less weed control required. In the first few years, before shrubs fill in bare areas, weeds will be more prevalent, but by mulching around the shrub plantings in the fall they should be significantly suppressed. Leaving bare ground has many benefits for ground-nesting pollinators. Did you know we have 450 species of native bees in British Columbia, and 70% of those bees are solitary and ground-nesting!

Irrigation

Shrubs and trees require water in the hottest summer months for the first 1-2 years after planting or until their roots are well established. The amount of watering depends on light conditions and species. Deep, slow watering is more beneficial than frequent watering. If you don't have irrigation, early fall is the best time to plant.

Deer Protection

Most native shrubs are susceptible to deer browsing and should be protected with caging or fencing until they are tall enough to withstand browsing pressure.

