

The Ontario Native Shrub Success Planner

Step 1: Site Audit (Before You Buy)

- **Test Soil pH:** Is it acidic (Shield soil) or alkaline (Southern Ontario clay)?
- **Identify Light Zones:** Map your garden for "Deep Shade" (under 2h sun) vs "Full Sun" (6h+).
- **Check Clearance:** Are there overhead wires or underground pipes (especially for fast growers)?
- **Spot Invasives:** Have you cleared all Common Buckthorn from the area?

Step 2: Custom Selection Matrix

Fill this out based on the article's recommendations:

Target Area	Recommended Shrub	Key Benefit (Pollinator/Privacy)
Dry Shade	<i>e.g., Pagoda Dogwood</i>	Nesting site for Wood Thrush
Privacy Border		
Wet/Clay Spot		
Winter Interest		

Step 3: The "Nursery Inspection" Checklist

When at the nursery, verify each plant against these 4 points:

1. **Provenance:** Ask if the seeds were sourced locally (Ontario-native).
2. **Root Health:** Gently check if the plant is "root-bound" (roots circling the pot).
3. **Leaf Integrity:** Look for signs of Spongy Moth larvae or powdery mildew.
4. **Species Match:** Double-check the Latin name (e.g., *Sambucus canadensis* vs non-native *S. nigra*).

Step 4: Installation Protocol

- **Digging:** Hole should be 2x wider than the pot, but no deeper.
- **Symbiosis:** Add mycorrhizal inoculant to the backfill soil.
- **Hydration:** Provide 25L of water immediately after backfilling.

- [] **Protection:** Apply 5-10cm of cedar mulch (keep mulch away from the bark/trunk).