

Vegetative Buffer



What's a vegetative buffer?

Vegetated buffers are trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants that catch sediment and other pollutants before they reach a body of water.

The most effective buffers are as wide and deep as possible and include a mix of trees, shrubs, ground cover plants, and organic ground cover.



Installation

1. Check with Code Enforcement for a permit to work in the shoreland zone.
2. If your buffer is narrow or nonexistent, select a mix of native trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants that are suitable to the growing zone, light, and soil conditions of the area.
3. Design the buffer to include a narrow access path (less than 4' wide) to the water and place your plants to accommodate your favorite views.



Maintenance

Year One: Water deeply each week, allowing water to reach the root ball. Planted areas can be weeded but should not be raked.

After One Year: Only water if there's a lack of normal rainfall. Once the plants are well established, you can let the planted area naturalize so that you do not need to replenish mulch or weed. The organic "duff" layer or groundcover of leaves and pine needles will serve as natural mulch.

Pruning: Depending on plants chosen, you may wish to prune certain plants so they don't become overgrown and block your view.

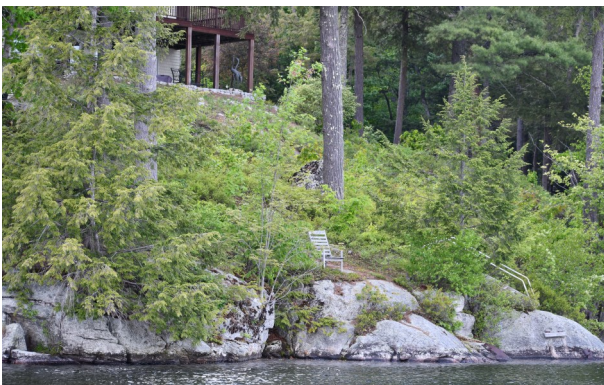
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Benefits of Buffers

Tree and shrub leaves slow down raindrops while ground cover plants, decomposing leaves, pine needles, and branches filter stormwater runoff on the ground. Plant roots hold soil in place, help to slow down stormwater runoff, and absorb water and nutrients. Vegetative buffers can also enhance privacy, filter noise and wind, and attract birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

Natural Buffers

If you have a natural buffer already, try to minimize impacts to that area. Prevent raking the natural ground cover which is important in protecting underlying soils and in the filtering and slowing down of stormwater runoff. Plant in areas with thin vegetation and prune or replace plants that are sick or dead to keep your buffer healthy.



Build Your Buffer

Choose from the plant species listed below to build a successful buffer tailored to this unique region in Maine.

Vines and Groundcovers

- Bearberry
- Creeping Juniper
- Lowbush Blueberry
- Moss Phlox/ Creeping Phlox
- Bunchberry
- Virginia Creeper
- Laborador Violet
- Wild Ginger
- Wintergreen
- Marsh Blue Violet

Small Shrubs

- Bush Honeysuckle
- Buttonbush
- Common Juniper
- Fragrant Sumac
- Sheep Laurel
- Shrubby Cinquefoil
- Snowberry
- Sweet Fern
- Sweetgale

Ferns

- Cinnamon Fern
- Hayscented Fern
- Interrupted Fern
- Lady Fern
- Ostrich Fern

Grasses

- Big Bluestem
- Indian Grass
- Little Bluestem
- Switchgrass

Perennials

- Foxglove
- Beardtongue
- Bee Balm
- Black Eyed Susan
- Bloodroot
- Bugbane, Black Cohosh
- Butterfly Weed
- Cardinal Flower
- Columbine Foamflower
- Large Gayfeather/Large Blazing Star
- Joe Pye Weed
- Marsh Marigold
- New England Aster
- Northern Blue Flag Iris
- Turtlehead
- Purple Coneflower
- Solomon's Seal
- Wild Geranium

Tall Shrubs

- Beach Plumb
- Black Chokeberry
- Coastal Sweet Pepperbush
- Common Witch Hazel
- Gray Dogwood
- Highbush Blueberry
- Inkberry
- Northern Bayberry
- Northern Spicebush
- Red-twig Dogwood
- Staghorn Sumac
- Winterberry
- Witherod

Trees

- American Hornbeam
- Balsam Fir
- Black Spruce
- Black Tupelo
- Eastern Hop-hornbeam
- Eastern Red Cedar
- Northern Red Oak
- Northern White Cedar
- Red Maple
- Red Pine
- Sugar Maple
- Swamp White Oak
- Tamarack/Larch
- White Spruce
- Yellow Birch

Yard Notes

- Full Sun
- Partial Sun
- Full Shade
- Well-Draining Soil
- Moist Soil
