



Landscaping Woodland Areas

Homes built in woodland areas often offer the home gardener a wonderful opportunity for naturalistic landscaping. If you have a home on a wooded plot, spend some time considering how you want to use the property. Lawns require constant maintenance and it would be practical to plant grass only where needed for play areas or where a uniform carpet of turf will give the landscape effect you desire.

If the plot is heavily wooded, sort out trees that you will keep and get rid of those that are unnecessary or unhealthy. An arborist, landscaper or forester can help you choose the trees to save and give you pointers on the care they will require. Remember that trees in a woodland are subject to the law of survival of the fittest. Many on your property are or will soon be losers in the battle.

Cull the poorer trees to give the more desirable ones a better chance. By limiting competition, fertilizing, pruning and controlling pests, you can help trees acquire their natural beauty. Opening the forest canopy will enhance air movement and reduce any excessive moisture. Sunlight filtering through will also encourage desirable lower-growing ground covers and wildflowers.

After you have culled the unneeded trees, you will need to get rid of unwanted brush and vines. Much of this growth can be removed mechanically by grub hoe and brush hook. Chemical brush killers used carefully for two to three years should rid a wooded area of unwanted brush before planting ornamentals. In most instances, fallen leaves can be left in place without their hampering brush control.

The amount of clearing done will depend upon the site and personal wishes. One does not always have to create a “park-like” atmosphere to achieve an attractive setting. During the period of brush control, paths through the wooded portion can be planned and constructed. The paths may be just compressed earth or you might want to use flagstone, bark, wood chips, or other paving that will blend into the surroundings.

These paths will be the avenues from which you view future plantings. The paths and plantings should give the illusion of wandering through quiet, secluded woodlands. In order to maintain this illusion it will probably be necessary to keep the paths some distance within the property lines or use an unobtrusive live or constructed screening.

Your woodland border area is an excellent place to use shade-loving shrubs, ground covers, bulbs, ferns and wild flowers. Many of the plants, once properly planted will be nearly maintenance-free.

Planning the Area That Borders the Lawn

Most rural New Hampshire properties, farm and non-farm, have a wider front lawn than do village and city places. Also, rural properties usually have a pasture, a cultivated or unkept field bordering the lawn on each side.

In this situation it may be best to define the maintained lawn with a fence or border planting at the side edges of the lawn extending to the front of the property. Usually a fence is preferred. Use fencing appropriate to the

location. A 2- or 3-board fence of simple design works well for most rural places. Paint the fence white or the same color as the house. An unpainted rail or hurdle fence is more in keeping with a house in a naturalistic setting or with a house of rustic architecture.

Instead of a fence you may prefer an informal border of shrubs; if so, select shrubs of low-growing varieties over which a view is obtained of the road approach. For many rural New Hampshire properties, a low stone wall makes a good border. Be sure that the fence, wall or planting is on your own property, and not on that which belongs to the public highway.

Vines may be grown on the fence and irregularly spaced shrubs may be planted in front of it. If you wish, you may plant a flower border 1 1/2 feet or more wide in front and close to the fence. The flower border need not extend the entire length.

Landscaping between the house and the road depends somewhat upon the distance between them. If the house is fairly close to the road, the front lawn need not be separated from it with a fence or a planting of shrubs. The lawn could extend to the roadside. If some division seems desirable, a fence of suitable design is usually preferred, particularly if there are large roadside trees growing there.

Rural dwellers whose homes are several hundred feet back from the highway may not want to maintain a lawn for this entire depth. A fence, a low stone wall, or a border planting of low-growing shrubs could be placed at the front portion of the area to be mowed regularly with a lawn mower.

Outside this area plant a grain crop or allow the space to develop naturally with field grasses. Mowing twice during the summer in June and August with a sickle-bar mower will keep the grass tidy. This space might also be used as a pasture for grazing horses, calves or sheep. Your County Extension Educator or farm supply store representative can offer you suggestions on the best seeding mixture to plant for these purposes.

Landscaping Farm Ponds

Many rural New Hampshire properties have had ponds built or small natural bodies of water located on them. Very often these ponds can be developed for multi-purpose use. However, even if its function is more utilitarian than recreational or aesthetic, ponds may be made more attractive. Conditions causing muddy algae-covered, mosquito-ridden ponds can often be corrected and plant material added to enhance the setting. Before you landscape your farm pond, consider these points:

Allow easy access to the pond and allow farm pond areas to be visible. This helps prevent farm pond misuse or drowning.

Some persons voice objections to hardwood plantings inviting seepage as roots disintegrate. Many conservationists believe that the small amount of seepage is offset by the benefits from such plants. Besides, many ponds have hardwood trees around them, with no apparent detrimental effects. Plants such as willows do have a beneficial effect in shading ponds for trout fishing, but interfere with fishing if they are covering most of the shoreline.

If you wish to attract and hold wildlife, choose at least a few plants which are good seed and berry producers. Good food-producing plants in combination with good cover plants, such as young conifers, will have something to offer wildlife throughout the year.

A Few Plants for Woodland Gardens

Ground covers

Barrenwart
Bugleweed
Bunchberry
Foam Flower
Galax
Lily-of-the-Valley
Pachysandra
Partridge Berry
Periwinkle
PlaintainLilies
Trillium
Violets
Ferns

Shrubs

Blueberries
Drooping Leucothoe
Kousa Dogwood
Mountain Laurel
Rhododendron
Viburnums
Witch Hazels

Partial List of Conservation Plants

Plants for the area immediately around the pond

Cornus stolonifera, Red osier dogwood
Salix discolor (or *S. caprea*) Pussy willow
S. purpurea, Purple osier willow

Plants set back about 30-40 feet (or more) from the pond

Amelanchier canadensis, Shadblow
Cornus racemosa, Gray dogwood
Myrica pensylvanica, Bayberry
Picea spp., Spruce
Pinus strobus, White pine
Viburnum spp., Viburnum (preferably in shaded areas)

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