



Department of  
Horticultural Science

## SHRUBS 1 TO 4 FEET HIGH FOR NORTH CAROLINA LANDSCAPES

M. A. (Kim) Powell, Extension Horticultural Specialist

Landscapers and home gardeners rely upon plants in this size category because of their relatively low maintenance demands. Modern trends in landscaping depict this growing concern by utilizing groundcovers, dwarf, or slow-growing shrubs.

Plants in this category are not only used for their functional value but also for their aesthetic features. Mass plantings, where shrubs are planted on 4- to 5-foot centers, are implemented on larger projects. Properly selected cultivars of Japanese and Chinese hollies, cotoneaster, hypericum, and several of the junipers will give this "groundcover" effect.

Another popular use of small shrubs is in planters, especially in combination with street trees. These compact growing species are often used in formal designs to edge planters and walks.

Many folks will want a "foundation" plant for their residence. The following list offers several choices for this particular situation.

Several of the plants in this group, if completely forgotten, will grow higher than 4 feet and broader than the typical 3 to 4 feet. They are listed here because they can easily be kept in the smaller size range.

Botanical Name and COMMON NAME	Hardiness		Growth				Height		Landscape Remarks
	Zone	Group	Rate	Exposure	Texture	Form	Spread		
Abelia grandiflora GLOSSY ABELIA	6,7,8	semi- evergreen	slow	sun, part shade	fine	irregular to oval	3-4' 3-5'	'Prostrata' 'Sherwood'	
Aucuba japonica 'nana' DWARF AUCUBA	7,8	E	slow	shade	coarse	upright rounded	2-3' 3-4'	Excellent shade-loving dwarf plant	
Berberis thunbergii var. 'Atropurpurea' RED JAPANESE BARBERRY	6,7,8	D	medium	sun	medium- fine	rounded	3-6' 4-6'	'Crimson Pygmy'	
Buxus microphylla LITTLELEAF BOXWOOD	6,7,8	E	slow	semi- shade	medium- fine	compact rounded	3-4' 3-4'	'Compacta' Useful for low hedges	
Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa' TRUE DWARF BOXWOOD	6,7,8	E	very slow	semi- shade	medium- fine	rounded	3-4' 4-5'	True dwarf English Boxwood requires excellent drainage	
Chaenomeles japonica JAPANESE FLOWERING QUINCE	6,7,8	D	medium	sun- part shade	medium	rounded	3-4' 3-4'	Low growing, densely branched	
Cotoneaster dammeri BEARBERRY COTONEASTER	6,7,8	E	medium	sun	fine	spreading	1-2' 3-5'	White flowers/red fruit. Good for groundcover effect as branches take root	
Cotoneaster horizontalis ROCKSPRAY COTONEASTER	6,7,8	E	slow	sun	fine	spreading	2-3' 4-7'	Good rock garden plant	
Daphne odora WINTER DAPHNE	6,7,8	E	slow	semi- shade	fine- medium	rounded	2-3' 2-3'	Flowers in winter. Very aromatic. 'Alba'-white flowers	
Deutzia gracilis SLENDER DEUTZIA	6,7,8	D	slow	sun semi-shade	medium- fine	rounded	2-3' 3-4'	Very adaptable to adverse conditions	
Euonymus japonicus 'microphyllus' DWARF JAPANESE EUONYMUS	7,8	E	fast	sun or shade	fine- medium	oval	1-3' 2-3'	Small-leaved form dwarf sized	
Gardenia radicans CREEPING GARDENIA	8	E	slow	semi-	fine	spreading	1-2' 2-3'	White, fragrant flowers	
Hypericum patulum ST. JOHN'S WORT	6,7,8	E	rapid	sun	medium	spreading	3' 3'	Many varieties available	
Ilex cornuta (DWARF) CHINESE HOLLY	6,7,8	E	slow	sun semi-shade	coarse	rounded and spreading	3-4' 3-4'	'Burfordi nana' 'Rotunda' 'Carissa'-medium texture	
Ilex crenata JAPANESE HOLLY	6,7,8	E	slow	sun or shade	medium- fine	dense rounded	3-4' 3-4'	'Compacta' 'Helleri'	
Ilex vomitora 'Nana' DWARF YAUPON HOLLY	7,8	E	slow	sun semi-shade	medium	rounded	3-4' 4-5'	Excellent for eastern N.C.	
Jasminum floridum SHOWY JASMINE	7,8	semi- evergreen	slow- medium	sun	fine	weeping	3-4' 3-4'	Yellow flowers in spring deep green foliage	
Juniperus conferta SHORE JUNIPER	6,7,8	E	moderate	sun	fine	spreading	1-2' 4-5'	'Emerald Sea' 'Blue Pacific'	
Juniperus horizontalis CREEPING JUNIPER	6,7,8	E	medium- rapid	sun	fine	upright spreading	1-2' 3-4'	'Plumosa Compacta' 'P.C. Youngstown'	

Botanical Name and COMMON NAME	Hardiness		Growth				Height		Landscape Remarks
	Zone	Group	Rate	Exposure	Texture	Form	Spread		
Juniperus procumbens JAPGARDEN JUNIPER	6,7,8	E	very slow	sun	fine	spreading	<u>1-2'</u> 6-8'	'Nana' 'Varigata'	
Leucothoe fontanesiana DROOPING LEUCOTHOE	6,7,8	E	slow	shade	medium	spreading	<u>3-4'</u> 3'	Graceful drooping branches 'Nana'-very dwarf form	
Ligustrum japonicum 'Rotundifolium' CURLYLEAF LIGUSTRUM	7,8	E	slow	sun to part shade	medium	upright columnar	<u>3-4'</u> 3'	Lustrous dark green foliage	
Mahonia aquifolium OREGON GRAPE HOLLY	6,7	E	slow	part shade shade	coarse	upright stems broadly clumped	<u>2-3'</u> 2-3'	'Mayhan Strain' 'Compactum'	
Nandina domestica* DWARF NANDINA	7,8	E	slow	sun part shade	medium- fine	upright	<u>1-2'</u> 1-2'	'Atropurpea' 'Nana' 'Harbour Dwarf'	
Pinus mugo 'Compacta' DWARF MUGO PINE	6,7,8	E	slow	sun	fine	globe- shaped	<u>3-4'</u> 3-4'	Use grafted plants for true dwarf form	
Prunus laurocerasus DWARF ENGLISH LAUREL	6,7,8	E	moderate	sun or shade	medium- fine	upright spreading	<u>3-4'</u> 3-4'	'Otto Luyken' 'Zabeliana'	
Raphiolepis indica INDIA HAWTHORN	8	E	slow	sun or shade	coarse- medium	open spreading	<u>3-4'</u> 3-5'	Excellent coastal landscape plant. Several varieties available.	
Rhododendron eriocarpum DWARF INDICA AZALEAS	6,7,8	E	slow- moderate	semi- shade	fine	rounded	<u>1-2'</u> 1-2'	'Gumpo'	
Spirea thunbergii THUNBERG SPIREA	7,8	D	moderate	sun part shade	fine	spreading	<u>3-4'</u> 3-5'	Very early blooming spirea. Requires pruning to maintain neat appearance.	
Viburnum davidii DAVID VIBURNUM	7,8	E	moderate	sun or part shade	coarse medium	rounded compact	<u>3-4'</u> 3-5'	Good dwarf viburnum used in eastern N.C.	
Yucca filamentosa ADAM'S NEEDLE YUCCA	6,7,8	E	moderate	sun or part shade	coarse	open, erect stiff	<u>1-4'</u> 2-4'	Sword-like foliage Very limited landscape uses	