



MUSKOKA
CONSERVANCY

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Spring Shoreline Planting in Muskoka

As the snow begins to melt and we feel a warmer breeze in the air, we start to think about our garden projects for the spring season. Wondering what to plant along your shoreline property? When is best to plant? These and other things to consider – let us help!

Many of us are working to revitalize our shoreline, restore it to a natural environment, or simply enhance our property's natural "look". There are numerous benefits to shoreline naturalization and taking on a project of this nature can be simple with the right tools and knowledge in mind! These projects will generally cost you less to undertake, and they will be much easier to maintain because they are a sustainable solution.

Shoreline naturalization can help to decrease erosion along your shoreline property. Many native plants in Muskoka have deep root structures that will allow for shoreline soil to be held in place; you can create a natural shoreline that will better withstand ice damage, extreme weather events (flooding), currents, and wave action. Native shoreline plants are much more tolerant of variable conditions, they are able to outcompete most annual weeds, they are resistant to pests and disease, they provide food and habitat for wildlife, they blend in with the natural environment and they are beautiful and unique! If we work as a collective to naturalize our shorelines, we can certainly improve water quality in our lakes, rivers, and streams.

What to plant? There are many options and each property can be different – native tree and shrub species include: Sweet Gale, Red Osier Dogwood, Red Maple, Serviceberry, and Eastern White Cedar. Other herbaceous plants could include: Blue Flag Iris, Milkweed, Joe Pye Weed, Cardinal Flower, and Fringed Sedge. Muskoka Lakes Association has a great brochure with a more exhaustive list: http://www.mla.on.ca/Storage/28/759_Plantings_brochure.pdf.

When to plant? It is often best to take on planting projects in the spring season, or early fall. This is when plants are first becoming active, or just about to go into their dormant stage. The soil is moist at this time of year and once the frost is out of the ground it is safe to begin planting. Larger species (trees and shrubs) can be planted in the fall season with enough time to establish their root system before winter.

In April, Muskoka Conservancy is hosting a Native Plant Sale where many of these native species can be purchased if you are thinking of beginning a planting project. There are also a number of local nurseries that also carry native plant species.

If you are unsure what to do, where to start, or what plants would work for your property, why not give us a call for a free personalized shoreline visit!

Muskoka Conservancy: 705-645-7393 or jhead@muskokaconservancy.org.