

# PLANTING ON A SLOPE

## Tips & Advice for Planting in Sloped Areas

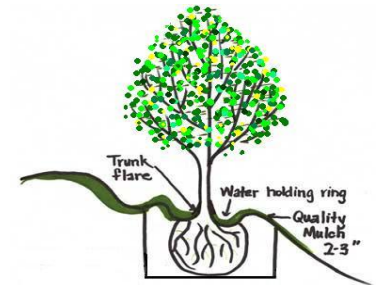
The following are common methods used to minimize erosion in sloped gardens. Before deciding which to follow, familiarize yourself with your slope's conditions (moisture, sun, wind etc.) and choose a planting scheme in response to those conditions. Do not remove existing vegetation (i.e. grass) from the site until you are ready to plant/hardscape your slope since existing roots are keeping the soil stabilized. If planting a garden over grass, use the sheet mulching method (smother grass with cardboard, compost and mulch) in place of physically removing sod.

### CREATE BERMS AND SWALES:

You can break up the slope by building up areas (berms) or creating depressions (swales). When planting into a slope, build up the soil just below the planting in order for the water to slow and thus percolate into the plant's root system. Note that any grade changes can negatively affect current root systems (of nearby trees and/or shrubs).

### SET STONES INTO THE SLOPE:

Dig larger stones into the slope and plant alpine/rock garden plants in between. This too will break up the slope therefore decreasing water run-off and erosion. Merely placing stones on the slope causes a potential hazard as soil washes away, dislodging the stone.



### CREATE A TERRACED SLOPE:

Terracing or re-contouring your slope into multi-level flat garden beds (much like large steps) can be created by dividing garden beds with retaining walls.\* Following the contours of the slope will lend to a more natural effect.

### VARIED HEIGHT PLANTING AND MULCHING:

Height variability as well as a mix of woody and herbaceous plants will intercept and slow rainfall, increasing proper water to soil infiltration. Mulch heavily between plants (3"); mulch is incredibly beneficial for it reduces run-off, conserves soil moisture, suppresses weeds, protects plants from winter-injury, prevents wide-fluctuations in soil temperature, and reduces soil splashing which can prevent the spread of some plant diseases.

### PLANTING THE RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT SPACE:

Place drought tolerant plants at the top of your slope and plants that can thrive in wet soils at the base. As a general rule, water will quickly run through/over the peak of a slope and settle at the base. Select plants that thrive in these conditions for a healthier lower maintenance garden.

\* Refer to a professional when installing retaining walls.

## Suggested Plants for a Slope

A great number of plants can be grown in slopes, from large shrubs and trees to low groundcovers. The following are just a few easy to grow suggestions, but we encourage you to be creative in your planting!

Slope Location	Botanical Name	Common Name	Height (cm)	Plant type	Characteristics
<b>SUN</b>					
Top-mid	<i>Achillea spp.</i>	Yarrow	0.6m	Perennial	Red, pink, yellow, orange, white flower
Mid – base	<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Canadian Anemone	30 cm	Perennial	Groundcover with white spring flowers
Top – mid	<i>Amelanchier stolonifera</i>	Running Juneberry	1.2-1.8m	Shrub	Forms thickets, edible fruit, white flowers, native, nice fall colour
Top - base	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Black Chokeberry	2.4m	Shrub	White flowers, black fruit, native
Top - mid	<i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>	Snow-in-Summer	10-25cm	Perennial	White flowers, mat forming, silver leaves
Top - mid	<i>Cotoneaster adpressus</i>	Creeping Cotoneaster	40cm	Shrub	Red berries, evergreen
Mid	<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>	Sunchoke (sunflower)	1.5-3m	Perennial	Yellow flowers, edible roots, native
Base	<i>Itea virginiana</i>	Sweetspire	1.8m	Shrub	White flowers, red fall colour, native
Top - mid	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Red Cedar	10m	Tree	Evergreen, drought tolerant, native
Top - mid	<i>Lavendula angustifolia</i>	Lavender	45cm	Perennial	Purple flowers, fragrant foliage
Base	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	30cm	Perennial	Late summer red flower, riparian, native
Mid - base	<i>Mentha spp.</i>	Mint, Spearmint	15-60cm	Perennial	Fragrant foliage, edible, purple flowers
Top - base	<i>Monarda spp.</i>	Beebalm, Bergamot	30-90cm	Perennial	Red, pink or mauve flowers, native
Top - base	<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i>	Bayberry	1.8-4m	Shrub	Versatile; dry-moist soil, shade, native
Mid	<i>Oenothera spp.</i>	Evening Primrose, Sundrops	20-30cm	Perennial	Yellow or pink flowers, native
Top - mid	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Culinary Oregano	30-45cm	Perennial	Fragrant foliage, purple flowers, edible
Top - mid	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switch Grass	0.6-1.5m	Grass	Airy inflorescence, winter interest, native
Base	<i>Rosa blanda</i>	Meadow Rose	1-1.25m	Shrub	Showy flowers, very few thorns, native
Top – mid	<i>Rhus aromatic</i>	Fragrant Sumac	1.5m	Shrub	Nice fall colour, fuzzy red berries, native
Top - mid	<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Staghorn Sumac	3m	Tree	Fall colour, colony forming trees, native
Top - mid	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Common Sage	60cm	Perennial	Drought tolerant, edible, mauve flowers
Top - mid	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	1-1.25m	Grass	Brilliant fall colour, native
Top - mid	<i>Sedum spp.</i>	Stonecrop	10-50cm	Perennial	Drought tolerant, various colours
Top - mid	<i>Stachys byzantine</i>	Lamb's Ears	30cm	Perennial	Fuzzy silver foliage, purple flowers
Top - mid	<i>Thymus spp.</i>	Thyme	10cm	Perennial	Low growing groundcover, aromatic

Slope Location	Botanical Name	Common Name	Height (cm)	Plant type	Characteristics
<b>PART SHADE / SHADE</b>					
Top - base	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Grey Dogwood	4m	Shrub	White berries, pollinator, native
Top - base	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Red Osier Dogwood	4.5m	Shrub	Young twigs red, white flowers, native
Top - mid	<i>Epimedium spp.</i>	Barrenwort, Bishop's Hat	15-40cm	Perennial	Drought tolerant, groundcover
Top - mid	<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	Wintercreeper	1.2m	Shrub	Evergreen, spreading woody shrub
Top - mid	<i>Gallium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff	20cm	Perennial	Small white flowers, groundcover
Top - mid	<i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i>	Big Root Cranesbill	30-60cm	Perennial	Pink flowers, fragrant leaves
Top - mid	<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Bloody Cranesbill	35cm	Perennial	Bright pink flowers, nice fall colour
Mid	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Witch-hazel	3.6m	Shrub	Yellow blooms very early spring, native
Top - mid	<i>Hydrangea spp.</i>	Hydrangea	varies	Shrub	Showy white flowers, drought tolerant
Top - mid	<i>Lamium spp.</i>	Deadnettle	25cm	Perennial	Purple, white or yellow flowers
Base	<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	Ostrich Fern	1.5m	Perennial	Large fern, edible fiddleheads, native
Mid	<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	Sweet Cicely	80cm	Perennial	White flowers, anise flavoured seeds
Base	<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	Sensitive Fern	30-60cm	Perennial	Chartreuse coloured fern, native
Top - base	<i>Parthenocissus vitacea</i>	Virginia creeper	varies	Vine	Versatile, sun or shade, nice fall colour
Mid	<i>Phlox stolonifera</i>	Creeping Phlox	10-30cm	Perennial	Purple flowers, part shade to shade
Mid - base	<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	Obedient Plant	45-90cm	Perennial	Late summer white or mauve flowers
Mid - base	<i>Polemonium reptans</i>	Jacob's Ladder	30-45cm	Perennial	Purple, pink or white flowers, native
Mid	<i>Polygonatum spp.</i>	Solomon's Seal	0.9m	Perennial	Arching foliage, some native
Mid	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas Fern	45cm	Perennial	Evergreen native fern
Mid	<i>Pulmonaria spp.</i>	Lungwort	30cm	Perennial	Spotted leaves, purple to pink flowers
Top - mid	<i>Sorbaria sorbifolia</i>	False spirea	1.5m	Shrub	White flowers, readily suckers
Mid - base	<i>Symphoricarpos alba</i>	Snowberry	0.9-1.5m	Shrub	White berries, attracts birds, native
Mid - base	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Foam Flower	30cm	Perennial	Fuzzy white flowers, native groundcover
Top - mid	<i>Viola sororia</i>	Common Blue Violet	25cm	Perennial	Purple, blue flowers, native groundcover

Many plants listed in these lists can be very aggressive spreaders, and it is for this very trait that makes them so effective at erosion control. When introducing these plants to your landscape, ensure they will not spread into neighbouring yards, garden beds or turf areas by installing root fences.