



The Importance of Shorelines

I. HABITAT

Shorelines are a critical and sensitive link between land and water, often called “the ribbon of life”. The land and shallow water that meet at the water’s edge provide a nursery for the wildlife.

Here, fish spawn, aquatic insects find mates, waterfowl nest, and turtles scramble ashore to lay their eggs. When development destroys the vegetation, all living things are affected.

II. WATER QUALITY

Shoreline vegetation helps to protect water quality. A dense strip of natural vegetation is an important buffer which filters rainwater that runs over the surface of the land. Shrubs, trees, grasses and wildflowers all play a role in removing sediments from this surface runoff, and promoting its percolation into the soil – further cleaning the water, and recharging groundwater supplies.

A thick network of roots from a variety of waterfront plants help to keep shoreline soil on land where it belongs – not in waterways. Soil eroding into waterways contaminates spawning beds which reduces fish populations.

Shoreline Checklist

The following checklist summarizes some of the characteristics of a healthy shoreline. It will help you assess the quality of your shoreline, and to set priorities for restoration activities.

- There is an unmown strip of natural vegetation 5 - 30 metres wide along the length of the shoreline.
- There is a variety of native vegetation near the waterfront including trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers.
- There is a variety of materials in the shallow waters offshore (these can include rocks, gravel, woody debris, aquatic plants).
- No toxic materials are used near the shoreline where they could spill or leach into the lake (gasoline spills, cleaning products etc.)
- No pesticides, and a minimum of fertilizers are used on the property.
- The shoreline is made of natural materials which slope gently into the water (not constructed retaining walls).
- Buildings and septic beds are set back at least 30 metres from the shoreline.
- Septic tanks are pumped regularly.
- There is no sign of serious erosion along the shoreline.
- On sloping shorelines, paths to the water are angled across the slope to prevent erosion, (not running straight down to the water).
- The shoreline is dominated by plants native to the region
- There are no invasive exotic plants to disrupt native vegetation (common problem plants in the Quinte area include purple loosestrife, common reed, and European buck thorn).
- If the shoreline contains a dock, it is floating, cantilever or post construction (to allow free passage of water and wildlife).



Suggested Native Planting List For Shoreline & Upland Areas

Common Name

Scientific Name

Importance to Wildlife

Trees

Eastern White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Deer browse, nesting for birds
Silver Maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	
White Spruce	<i>Picea glauca</i>	Buds, leaves, seeds, bark and twigs food source for wildlife
American Elm	<i>Ulmus Americana</i>	
White Birch	<i>Betula papyifera</i>	Buds, leaves, seeds, sap, bark, twigs food source for wildlife
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Acorns important food source for an abundance of wildlife
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Preferred browse for moose, deer, rabbits
Balsam Poplar	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	Buds, catkins, bark, leaves and twigs used for food

Shrubs

Silky Dogwood	<i>Cornus anomum</i>	
Pussy Willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>	Browse for moose
Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Provides berries for birds, nesting sites in thickets
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Attractive flower clusters, provides berries for songbirds
Nannyberry	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Attractive flower clusters, provides berries for songbirds
Highbush Cranberry	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	Attractive flower clusters, provides berries for songbirds
Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Berries for wildlife

Wildflowers - Moist/Wet Areas

Blue Flag Iris	<i>Iris versicolor</i>	
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	
Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds
Jewelweed	<i>Impatiens pallida</i>	
Joe-Pye-Weed	<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	
Marsh Marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>	
Swamp Milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Food source for monarch butterfly caterpillar
Turtlehead	<i>Chelone glabra</i>	

Dry Areas

Black-Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Common Raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>
Lance-leaved Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>
Prickly Wild Rose	<i>Rosa acicularis</i>
Woodland Sunflower	<i>Helianthus divaricatus</i>
Wild Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>

Canadian wildflowers for upland areas

Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds
Butterflyweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Attracts butterflies
Meadow blazingstar	<i>Liatris ligulistylus</i>	Attracts butterflies, especially monarchs

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