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CHOOSING THE PLANTS

You've seen how shapes "shape" the appearance of your home. But, like most gardeners, odds are you really want to choose specific plants.

SIZE IT UP After you determine the shapes you want to use, it's time to determine the ultimate size that will look good. For example, if you want a pyramid, the first plant that comes to mind might be a large spruce. But do you want one in your foundation planting? Probably not — it could grow to be 25 feet wide or more! That size would be much too large for most houses. And I don't know about you, but I certainly don't want to keep pruning a large prickly plant to keep it small. So the mature size of your choice becomes an important factor. Sure, a capitata yew or a Canadian hemlock can be clipped so it fits the spot, just factor the maintenance time it will take as you choose each shape.

There are no hard and fast rules about heights. But you don't want plants covering your windows. The tallest shapes are usually at the corners. And a good rule of thumb is to keep the plants there slightly above or just below the edge of the roof.

Don't forget there's sun and shade to consider, along with other growing conditions. So, to help you get started, check out these plant lists, broken down by shapes, to the right.

You can easily use this design technique if nothing's planted in front of your home. Or if you want to revamp an established landscape, simply keep your favorite trees and shrubs and pair them up with a few new selections. All it takes to get a fresh, updated look is choosing a few simple shapes. □

— Jim Childs

'Mohican' viburnum

Castle Spire holly

Round

Abelia *Abelia* **'Edward Goucher'** Shrub; pink flowers from spring until frost; full sun to part shade; 4 to 5 ft. tall and wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 6 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Boxwood *Buxus* **'Green Velvet'** Evergreen shrub; easily sheared for size; full sun to part shade; 2 to 4 ft. tall and wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Brownii yew *Taxus x media* **'Brownii'** Evergreen shrub; dark green needles; shear for size; full sun to part shade; 8 to 10 ft. tall, 6 to 12 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Dwarf blue spruce *Picea pungens* **'Globosa'** Evergreen shrub; stiff steel blue needles; full sun; 3 to 4 ft. tall, 4 to 6 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 2 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Dwarf fothergilla *Fothergilla gardenii* Shrub; fragrant white flowers in spring; full sun to part shade; 3 to 4 ft. tall and wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Dwarf Korean lilac *Syringa meyeri* **'Palibin'** Shrub; fragrant lavender flowers in late spring; full sun; 4 to 5 ft. tall, 5 to 7 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Smooth leaf hydrangea *Hydrangea arborescens* **'Annabelle'** Shrub; white flowers in summer; full sun to part shade; 3 to 5 ft. tall, 4 to 6 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Viburnum *Viburnum lantana* **'Mohican'** Shrub; white flowers in spring; full sun to part shade; 7 to 8 ft. tall, 8 to 10 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Pyramidal

American holly *Ilex opaca* Evergreen tree; shiny green foliage; need a male and female plant to get fruit; full sun to part shade; 15 to 30 ft. tall, 10 to 20 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Arborvitae *Thuja occidentalis* **'Holmstrup'** Evergreen tree; soft to the touch green foliage; slow growing; full sun to part shade; 10 to 15 ft. tall, 3 to 5 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Canadian hemlock *Tsuga canadensis* Evergreen tree; dark green needles; easily sheared or left natural; part shade to full shade; 40 to 70 ft. tall, 25 to 35 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Capitata yew *Taxus cuspidata* **'Capitata'** Evergreen tree; dark green needles; shear for size; full sun to full shade; 3 to 25 ft. tall, 2 to 15 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Dwarf Alberta spruce *Picea glauca albertina* **'Conica'** Evergreen shrub; slow, dense growing; full sun to part shade; 6 to 8 ft. tall, 3 to 5 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Holly *Ilex x meserveae* **Castle Spire®** Evergreen shrub; female produces red fruit; full sun to part shade; 8 to 10 ft. tall, 3 to 4 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Juniper *Juniperus scopullorum* **'Wichita Blue'** Evergreen tree; steel blue prickly foliage; can be sheared; full sun to part shade; 10 to 12 ft. tall, 3 to 4 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

PHOTO: Courtesy of Proven Winners® (holly) LOCATION: Atlanta Botanical Garden (redbud)

'Princeton Sentry' ginkgo

'Blue Chip' creeping juniper

'Traveller' redbud

Columnar

Arborvitae *Thuja occidentalis* **Emerald ('Smaragd')** Evergreen tree; bright green foliage; full sun to part shade; 12 to 15 ft. tall, 3 to 4 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Birch *Betula platyphylla* **Dakota Pinnacle® ('Fargo')** Tree; white bark; full sun; 20 to 30 ft. tall, 8 to 10 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Cutleaf buckthorn *Frangula alnus* **Fine Line® ('Ron Williams')** Shrub; fine, feathery foliage; full sun to part shade; 5 to 7 ft. tall, 2 to 3 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 2 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

European hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* **'Frans Fontaine'** Tree; medium green foliage; full sun to part shade; 20 to 25 ft. tall, 6 to 10 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Flowering crabapple *Malus* **'Adirondack'** Tree; white flowers in spring; full sun; 15 to 18 ft. tall, 8 to 10 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Ginkgo *Ginkgo biloba* **'Princeton Sentry'** Tree; male cultivar won't produce fruit; full sun; 15 to 40 ft. tall, 15 to 20 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Hicks yew *Taxus x media* **'Hicksii'** Evergreen tree; dark green needles; easy to shear for size; full sun to part shade; 10 to 12 ft. tall, 3 to 4 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Japanese holly *Ilex crenata* **'Sky Pencil'** Evergreen shrub; very slow growing; full sun to part shade; 6 to 8 ft. tall, 2 to 3 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Horizontal

Bird's nest spruce *Picea abies* **'Nidiformis'** Evergreen shrub; dark green needles; slow growing; full sun; 3 to 5 ft. tall, 9 to 12 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Creeping juniper *Juniperus horizontalis* **'Blue Chip'** Evergreen shrub; blue-green needles; full sun; 4 to 12 in. tall, 2 to 8 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Cutleaf staghorn sumac *Rhus typhina* **Tiger Eyes® ('Bailtiger')** Shrub; bright golden yellow foliage; full sun to part shade; 3 to 6 ft. tall and wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Deutzia *Deutzia gracilis* **'Nikko'** Shrub; white flowers in spring; full sun to part shade; 1 to 3 ft. tall, 2 to 5 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Doublefile viburnum *Viburnum plicatum tomentosum* Shrub; white flowers in spring; full sun to part shade; 8 to 15 ft. tall, 10 to 18 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Japanese maple *Acer palmatum* **'Shindeshojo'** Tree; shades of red foliage from spring to fall; full sun to part shade; 10 to 15 ft. tall, 15 to 20 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 6 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Pagoda dogwood *Cornus alternifolia* Tree; creamy white flowers in late spring; full sun to part shade; 15 to 25 ft. tall, 20 to 30 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Rockspray cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* Shrub; red fruit in late summer; full sun to part shade; 2 to 3 ft. tall, 5 to 8 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Weeping

Beech *Fagus sylvatica* **'Pendula'** Tree; green leaves turn coppery-gold in fall; full sun to part shade; 20 to 50 ft. tall, 15 to 30 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 7, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 7 to 1

Cherry *Prunus* **Snow Fountains®** Tree; white flowers in spring; full sun; 8 to 15 ft. tall, 6 to 8 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Flowering crabapple *Malus* **hybrid 'Louisa'** Tree; pink flowers in spring; full sun; 8 to 10 ft. tall, 10 to 12 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Juniper *Juniperus scopulorum* **'Tolleson's Blue Weeping'** Evergreen tree; steel blue foliage; full sun; 12 to 20 ft. tall, 8 to 12 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1

Mulberry *Morus alba* **'Chaparral'** Tree; male cultivar won't produce fruit; full sun to part shade; 6 to 10 ft. tall, 8 to 12 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Norway spruce *Picea abies* **'Pendula'** Evergreen tree; dark green needles; needs to be staked to grow tall; full sun; 2 to 10 ft. tall, 4 to 10 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Pussywillow *Salix caprea* **'Pendula'** Tree; silvery catkins in early spring; full sun to part shade; 6 to 7 ft. tall, 5 to 7 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1

Redbud *Cercis canadensis texensis* **'Traveller'** Tree; bright pink flowers in early spring; full sun to part shade; 4 to 6 ft. tall, 10 to 12 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 6 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1