

A Practical Guide to Returning Your Shoreland to a More Natural State

Before Starting:

- Evaluate your shoreland: soil, slope, moisture, light conditions, erosion potential, access points, shoreline traffic patterns, pier placement.
- Identify tree, shrub and plant species native to your area: seek an undisturbed or undeveloped lakefront site with similar conditions to yours to learn what a natural shoreline looks like and is composed of; get a list of native plants from your local WDNR, UW-Extension, landscapers and or consultants specializing in shoreland restoration.
- Evaluate the existing vegetation on your shoreland: identify native species for preservation and exotic species for removal; identify trees and shrubs for pruning to maintain a viewing corridor.
- Determine which restoration strategy or combination of approaches will be most effective:
 1. Preservation of existing native vegetation with selective pruning if necessary.
 2. Natural recovery (eliminating mowing) to allow the dormant, native seed bank to reestablish a natural shoreland. This is effective where turf grasses are not established and fill has not covered the original soil.
 3. accelerated recovery or the planting of native trees, shrubs, grasses, or flowers.
- Consider your goals: Restore shoreland habitat? Aesthetics? Erosion control? Nutrient buffer? Noise reduction? Privacy?
- Create a rough sketch of your vision incorporating the above elements.
- Consult with your local WDNR or UW-Extension agents or landscapers specializing in shoreland restoration if you have any questions or if you need more information.

Step One

Kill undesirable, herbaceous vegetation using:

1. Black plastic- the most effective and environmentally friendly methods: must be applied for 4-6 weeks during early and mid summer.
2. Herbicide- roundup is the safest and best; vegetation must be actively growing; instructions should be strictly followed; must be applied to existing vegetation 4-6 days before planting a buffer.

Step Two

Acquire planting materials, either bare root stock or containerized trees, shrubs or herbaceous plants. Ensure that the planting materials are kept in a cool, shady spot and well watered until they are planted. Transplanting from different areas of one's own property often works well.

Step Three

Plant your native trees and shrubs so that the plant's soil line (identified by a slight swelling of the stem) is flush with the ground level. For plant plugs, ensure that the top of the soil plug is covered with soil to avoid drying out of the roots.

Step Four

Mulch between plants to keep competing vegetation down, control erosion, and maintain moisture.

Step Five

Water plants thoroughly, at least 1 inch of water a week.