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Large Shrubs for Area Landscapes

Landscapes are better balanced and make better habitats for the birds if they not only include tall shade trees and groundcovers, but everything in between, including perennials, small and large shrubs and small trees.

In the large shrub category, consider butterfly rose, primrose jasmine, pyracantha and standard yaupon holly.

A tough old-fashioned rose, such as the butterfly rose, is a great choice to be a transition plant in a landscape. Butterfly rose qualifies as a xeriscape plant because it will survive without any supplemental irrigation. Despite blooming eight to nine months of the year, butterfly rose is not bothered by diseases or insects. It will grow to fill a space 10 feet tall at 15 feet in diameter if planted in full sun. The thorns make it more desirable as a wildlife plant, but do make it hard to prune or shape. Select butterfly rose if you have enough space to let it grow to full size and glory.

Primrose jasmine is an evergreen shrub with a weeping shape. The foliage is very dark green. It shows off the glossy yellow flowers that appear in later winter. Primrose jasmine does not seem to have any insect or disease pests. Even the deer do not eat it. It grows to eight feet around and 8ft high. It can be planted in full sun or in partial shade, such as under deciduous trees.

Pyracantha is one of my favorite plants to fill the role of large shrub in the landscape. Related to apples, they produce a crop of red or orange berries every winter that are very showy until the birds eat them in late winter. Pyracantha makes an airy shrub 10 feet wide and 20 feet tall if left on its own, but it can also be pruned to any shape to suite the landscape. Birds love to build nests in its thorny branches.

In addition to the thorns that turn off some gardeners, pyracantha is a non-native plant that some folks have labeled as invasive.

Standard yaupon holly has many of the same characteristics of pyracantha. It has berries for the birds, grows to the same dimensions, can be pruned to any size or shape, and is drought-tolerant. However, standard yaupon does not have thorns, is not eaten by deer, has more shade tolerance than pyracantha and is native to Texas.

 Whichever large shrubs you select they can be planted now and will contribute to a balanced landscape.