

April 26, 2004

Five year plan for replacing buckthorn at Highland Woods Condominiums

Status:

Currently much of the undergrowth in the wooded areas behind/between the condominium units is large common buckthorn trees. As common buckthorn is considered an undesirable species, we propose to remove areas within this mass and replace the buckthorn with desirable trees and shrubs. It is important to the owners that their privacy and screening is kept. If this work is staggered over a period of 5 (or 7) years, screening can be maintained since the first plantings will grow to provide screening when the third stage happens. This system will also spread out the cost. A secondary benefit of removing the buckthorn will be to encourage the return of native wild flowers.

The larger trees which were there when the condominiums were being built are Catalpa, Red/slippery elm, Sugar maple, Black cherry, a few Oak and Apple, and the (dreaded) buckthorn. I now understand that this property was an apple orchard with the main house on the crest of the slope. With the exception of the large oak, and stumps, the remaining trees are second growth pioneer species that took hold when the orchard was abandoned. You will notice that the trunks are all about the same diameter. Going back farther in time, your site was probably an oak woods. The soil would indicate that. All of these tree species give us the clues as to which will grow well in the woods.

As more light reaches the woodland floor, I believe native wildflowers will return. At this time, there are several large clumps of Garlic Mustard, a highly invasive species. Pull out what you can and apply Roundup to the rest – NOW! DO NOT let this plant go to seed.

When the condominium site was developed in the 80's, Locust, Marshall ash, Maples, Flowering Crab, White birch, Serviceberry, Austrian pine and Techny arborvitae were planted in the front yards. Shrubbery consists of spreading juniper, spreading yew, red-twigged dogwood, arrowwood viburnum and a few columnar buckthorn. These have thrived and are now mature specimens.

Phasing:

Of the plants chosen to be planted, most are native to the United States, though some are not native to Wisconsin. The evergreens are included to give you year-round privacy/screening. Please call Jane at Bur Oak Designs, Inc. if you would like her help or input laying out the plants.

Year 1: Mark off areas of approximately 25 feet by 30 feet. Choose 1/3 of those areas for phase one. (see drawings) Within those areas, cut all of the buckthorn at the base and paint the stumps with Roundup concentrate. Spray the buckthorn seedlings with Roundup, too (diluted). Spray **ONLY** the plants you want to kill. Because of the density of the woods and the slope of the land, it will be better to cut off the trees rather than dig out the roots. Plant clusters of 9 to 11 understory trees and shrubs from the attached list, including some that are faster growing and some that are slower growing. Before actually planting any of the plants, stand on the decks of the condos who are affected and be sure the plants are located where they will provide the most screening. Begin planting native wild flowers and ferns, as there should be more light reaching the forest floor.

Year 3 (or year 4): Choose the second third areas for phase two. Cut off the buckthorn, and repeat Year 1's work.

Year 5 (or year 7): Cut off the remaining buckthorn, and repeat Year 1's work.

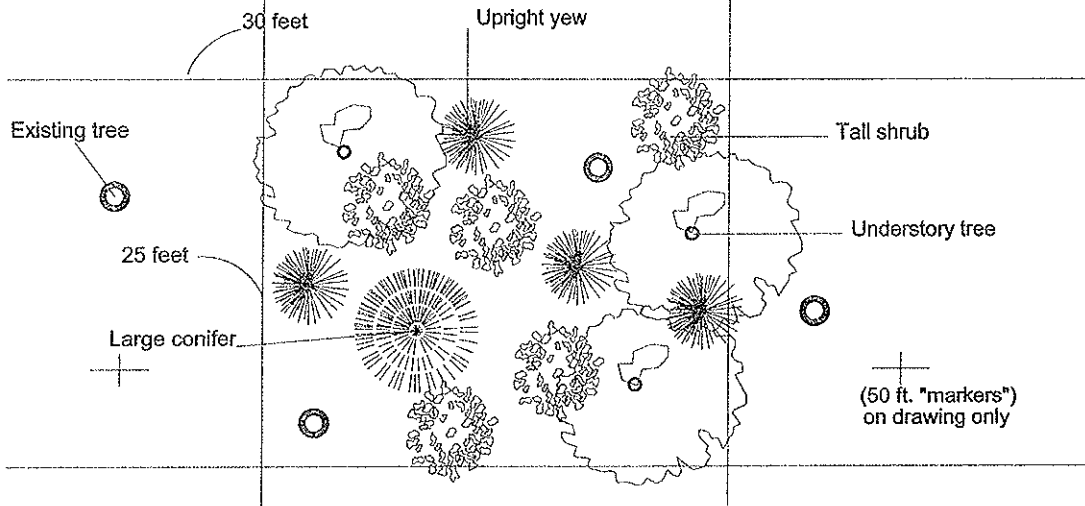
Care and maintenance:

- Purchase only healthy plants (these probably are not the cheapest) from a reliable source. Plant size is important. The smallest plants will require more care for several years than those that are of the listed sizes.
- Bare root shrubs which are planted when they are dormant are economical, provided that one takes care when planting, and waters them regularly through the first season.
- Plant them at the correct depth and create a "dam" to hold water at 1' to 1.5' radius from plant stem/trunk.
- Water well (i.e. soak them thoroughly) when planting to remove air pockets.
- Mulch with a 3" layer of shredded hardwood bark, staying away from the stems/trunk. Since the purpose of this mulch is to retain moisture and minimize weed competition, you should not need to do this after the first year.
- Be sure the plants will be watered regularly through the first season. One inch of water per week is good. Evergreens must be watered until the ground freezes as these plants transpire throughout the winter.
- If there are many rabbits in the woods, use chicken wire around the plants until they are established.

Please call me if you have questions or concerns. A short phone call or site visit can take care of most situations. (Jane at 287-0448)



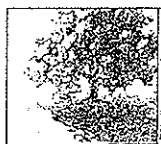
Elevation View



Plan view

Example of how to lay out grid

Scale is 1/8" = 1' 0"



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Highland Woods Condominiums
 Madison, WI
 April 23, 2004
 1/8"=1'

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