

Regina Food Forest

A food forest is a when plants that attempt to mimic the ecosystem and patterns found in nature are planted. Food forests place emphasis on trees, shrubs, perennials and self-seeding annuals. They are planted thickly and use ground covers to shade soil and suppress weeds. The diversity of plants attract insects, help pollinate crops and keep pest populations in check. They also keep rain water and act as windbreaks. Check the website for [Project Food Forest](#) for more information about food forests and their benefits.

Trees and Shrubs for a Regina Food Forest

Phil Johnson prepared this advice for what to plant in a Regina Food Forest.

Below is a list of food-producing trees and shrubs that grow well in Regina's climate and soil conditions. These provide food for humans but also for birds and pollinators. In addition, most are very attractive when in flower and in the fall when the leaves turn colour. Most can be found for sale in Regina garden centres (e.g. Plant Ranch, Dutch Growers, Unique Gardens, etc.).

Trees:

- Apple: there are many suitable varieties.
- Plum: especially "Patterson Pride", "Prairie", "Superb" and "Supreme".
- Shrubs:
- Saskatoons: there are many suitable varieties.
- Sour Cherry: there are many suitable varieties.
- Haskap: many varieties; requires two or more different varieties for pollination.
- Chokecherry: many varieties.
- Nanking Cherry: similar to sour cherry.
- Golden Currant: also the related red, white and black currants, and gooseberries.
- High Bush Cranberry: taste of jelly/sauce improves if harvested after frost.
- Raspberry: very nutritious, delicious and productive but need room to spread.

Perennials - these can be planted in sunny areas near/under the trees and shrubs:

- Rhubarb: an under-appreciated nutritious food plant.
- Strawberry: many varieties.
- Wild Strawberry; smaller fruit than regular strawberry, but as tasty.

- Chives.
- Oregano: not perennial here, but seeds survive overwinter and sprout in spring.
- Dill: not perennial, but seeds survive and sprout.
- Coriander: not perennial, but seeds survive and sprout.
- Note: herbs are used in small amounts for flavour but are nutritious and great for pollinators and beneficial insects.

Annuals

- vegetables and flowers can be planted in the food forest in sunny areas, as space and enthusiasm allows:
- Garlic, onions, beans (bush and climbing), tomatoes, squash, peas, potatoes, etc.

Groundcovers - these are forbs and grasses planted in the food forest to cover the ground, preserve moisture, fertilize the soil, provide habitat, pollen and nectar to insects and seeds to birds. Plant densely to crowd out weeds. E.g.: Clover, creeping thyme, Russian sage, little bluestem grass, beebalm, goldenrod, aster, sunflower, etc.

Note: Never use landscape fabric. It prevents natural soil building from occurring.

