

Volunteer

Professional

Volunteer + Professional

Commercial Curtain

Image Source: Rachel Greenbelt, "Koelreuteria paniculata, Roosevelt Center." 16 June 2014 via Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0





The Commercial Curtain is a good option for property owners looking to stop dust from blowing through and across their lot and onto adjacent properties. This design features fragrant and flowering trees and shrubs to bring life and color to lot edges.

Similar to a traditional windbreak, this lot design provides a landscaped barrier to alleys, side roads and adjacent properties, creating a visual screen and helping to prevent illegal dumping while improving the stormwater performance of a commercial lot.

For more information refer to [DFC-lots.com](https://dfc-lots.com)

What is the lot design likely to cost?

The estimated cost of the Commercial Curtain is moderate (\$1,000 – \$2,500) and based on 1.5 inch diameter trees, potted plants and utilizing volunteer labor. To save money, you can buy smaller trees or pots. The cost assumes residents or volunteers have access to basic safety gear and garden tools.

How much upkeep will this lot design require?

This is a low-maintenance lot design. Maintenance will include watering plants and newly planted trees, particularly during times of drought and excess heat.

Will the installation of this lot design require a professional?

The installation of this lot design should not require professional assistance if you, with the help and support of friends, family or neighbors would like to construct this lot design. Please refer to the Step-By-Step section for guidance. If you do not have the required support or feel unable to tackle this lot design, please seek professional assistance.

How long will it take to install this lot design?

While people tackle projects in different ways and at different speeds, the Field Guide estimates installation time of this lot design to be one full weekend with the help of at least three healthy adults or youth. The Field Guide assumes the lot is ‘construction ready,’ and all equipment and materials required for lot design have been acquired and are ready to use.

Cost	\$50 - 1,000	\$1,000 - 2,500	\$2,500 - 5,500	\$5,500 +
People	Volunteer		Professional	Volunteer + Professional
Experience	Beginner		Intermediate	Advanced
Upkeep	Low		Medium	High
Stormwater	Good		Better	Best
Location	Commercial Lot in Full Sun or Part Sun			

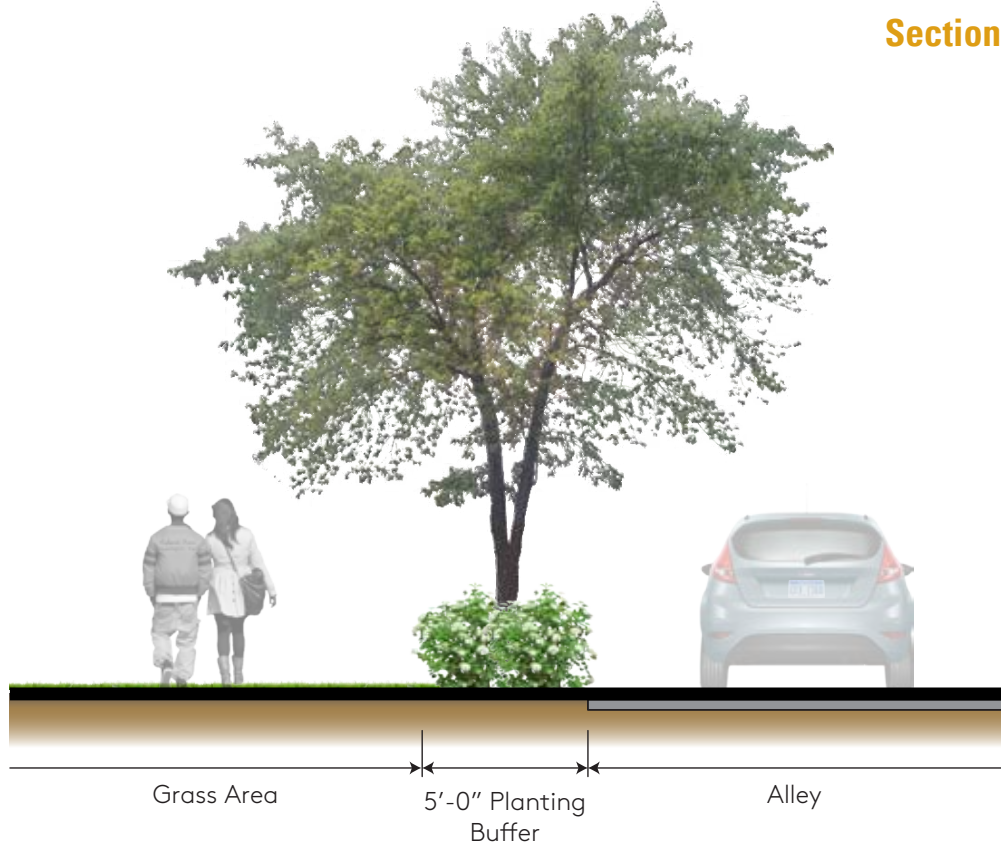
Commercial Curtain

Example of Windbreak Plantings

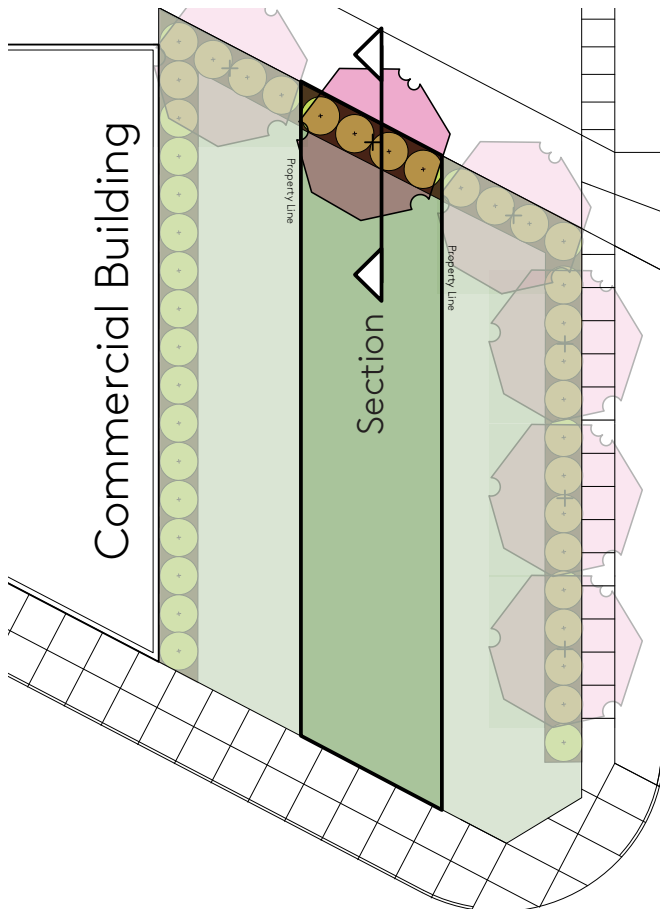
Section







1 - Row of Trees



Where Do I Grow?



The Commercial Curtain can be constructed on single or multiple lots. When installed on multiple lots, the design can create a clean landscaped edge around the perimeter of the properties. Due to the size of the particular trees selected for this lot design, it is recommended that only shrubs and bulbs be planted near buildings.

-  Flowering Tree
-  Shrub Hedge
-  Mulch and Daffodils
-  Grass or Optional Groundcover

Before You Start

'Construction Ready'

This lot design assumes that you have prepared the lot to a 'construction ready' state.

'Construction Ready' refers to a lot that is clean and clear of trash, hazardous objects, unwanted trees, brush and vegetation, fences, and other unwanted structures.

It may be necessary to remove grass in preparation for your lot design. Refer to the Remove Your Grass box located on the right hand side of this page for more information.

Is there an available water source near your lot? Consider how and where you will access water during and after construction to ensure that your plants can establish.

If your lot is not ready for construction, refer to the [Clean + Green](#) lot design.

You can find the lot design at [DFC-lots.com](https://dfc-lots.com).

Call Before You Dig

Locate underground utilities before beginning your lot design. MISS DIG provides a free service to Michigan residents by locating and marking utilities on requested properties. Call (800) 482-7171 or 811 at least three days before you plan to start digging on your lot.

Test Your Soil

Harmful pollutants have made their way into many urban soils. To proceed with awareness, consider having your soil tested before construction. Two great options are available:

Soil testing is free to members of Keep Growing Detroit's Garden Resource Program. Call (313) 757-2635 for more information or visit detroitagriculture.net.

If you are not yet a member, you can work directly with Michigan State University's (MSU) Extension Program. They have a Home Lawn and Garden Soil Test Mailer for \$25. For more information call (888) 678-3464 or visit msusoiltest.com.

If you are concerned about the presence of lead or other contaminants in your soil, call the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at (866) 691-5323 or (800) 424-LEAD.

Remove Your Grass

Need to remove grass in areas where you are constructing your lot design?

There are many ways to remove unwanted grass. The first is to remove the grass and its root system by digging up the grass. Another option is to cover your lot with cardboard or a plastic tarp to smother your grass in darkness. It will take several weeks, but after being covered, the dead grass will be easier to remove.

Till Safely

Before you till, inspect your lot for signs of buried concrete or rubble that was not removed during the cleanup stage. Large debris can ruin tiller blades.

When tilling, wear appropriate safety gear, such as covered boots with socks, long pants, safety glasses, dust mask, and ear protection. Make sure you understand the safe operating procedures of your tiller. Refer to the user's manual.

What You Need: Shopping List

Shopping List

The shopping list provides a breakdown of potential materials, tools, and resources required to construct this lot design.

This shopping list is designed for a commercial lot (20 by 120 feet).

Tools + Resources

Suggested Tools

- **Marking Paint and Tape Measure**
- **Safety Gear:** Gloves, heavy work boots, tall socks, pants, long sleeve shirts, dust masks, protective eye wear, ear plugs, and hard hats (if using heavy machinery)
- **Garden Tools:** Spades, shovels, rakes, trash bags, and wheelbarrows

Potential Water Sources

- Garden Hose with potential extension hose
- Sprinkler
- Rain Barrel in addition to other water source

Field Guide Resources

Resources are available on the Field Guide's web site.

- [Clean + Green](#)
- [Tree Planting Detail](#)
- [Bulb Planting Detail](#)

Materials List

Materials

- **Mulch or Wood Chips**, 1 cubic yard

Planting

- **Golden Rain Tree**, 1 pot or Balled and Burlapped
- **Fragrant Viburnum**, 2 pots or Balled and Burlapped
- **European Cranberry Viburnum**, 2 pots or Balled and Burlapped
- **Daffodils**, 100 bulbs

Remaining Lot (Optional)

Groundcover

- **Low-Maintenance Fescue Mix**, 11 to 12 pounds of seed
- **Germination Blanket**, 3 rolls (8 by 112.5 feet)

Commercial Curtain Step-By-Step

Let's Start

Want to create the Commercial Curtain but don't want to hire a professional? Here are a few guiding principles to help you construct your lot design.

Check off tasks as you go along.

Lot Design Steps

Volunteer:

- Prepare Your Lot**
- Plant Trees + Shrubs**
- Maintain Your Lot Design**
- Sow Remaining Lot**

Prepare Your Lot

Select the best location for the Commercial Curtain lot design. Use marking paint and a tape measure to map out the size, shape, and dimensions of your design. **The Field Guide recommends approximately 5 by 20 foot area (100 square feet) or the full width of your lot. The commercial lot shown on the design plan is 20 by 120 square feet.**

Minimal grass removal is required for your lot design. The Field Guide recommends removing the grass and its root system by digging up the grass.

Plant Trees + Shrubs

The Field Guide recommends planting 1.5 inch diameter trees; however, smaller or larger trees can be planted if preferred. Trees can be purchased in pots or balled and burlapped. If you decide to plant larger trees speak with a professional or an educational group as older trees can be more difficult to establish.

Plant trees as soon as possible after purchasing. If you cannot plant them the same day, do not leave unplanted trees in direct sunlight. Keep them in shade and well watered until you can plant them. (Trees dry out fast!)

Identify the location where you wish to plant the trees. Dig a hole three times the width of the root ball and equal to the depth.

Pots should be removed before placing the tree in the planting hole. Balled and burlapped root balls should remain wrapped until placed in hole. Unwrap the top 1/3 of the root ball and peel back the burlap once planted. Remove any twine, nails, or stakes. The root flare should be level with the ground when you place the tree in the hole.

Water the root ball, then backfill the hole with the soil previously removed from planting. Add water to the tree every six inches as you backfill the hole. Compact the soil lightly after each watering until the hole is filled with soil and level with the adjacent ground.

Commercial Curtain Step-By-Step

The Field Guide recommends adding three inch (1 cubic yard) depth of mulch or wood chips across the Commercial Curtain planting bed. Keep mulch or wood chips a few inches away from tree trunks.

For more guidance on tree planting refer to the [Tree Planting Detail](#).

○ Maintain Your Lot Design

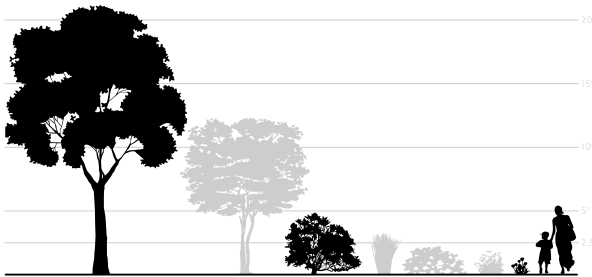
Trees and shrubs must be watered regularly during the first year. Water weekly or as needed. Add mulch annually to help suppress weed growth.

The Field Guide recommends connecting with an arborist or taking a workshop on tree health and maintenance. The Greening of Detroit offers a great Citizen Forester program to interested residents.



Visit the Resources page on the Field Guide's web site (DFC-lots.com) to discover other vendors and places to purchase plants.

Average Height of Plants



Trees, Shrubs, and Bulbs

○ Sow Remaining Lot

If you are seeking a lower maintenance alternative to traditional lawn, the Field Guide recommends a fescue seed mix. If you follow Commercial Curtain lot design you will need approximately 11 to 12 pounds of fescue seed mix for the remaining commercial lot (2,400 square feet) and three 8 by 112.5 foot rolls of single net germination blankets.

This family of floppy grasses is very drought-resistant and requires one cutting (in August or September) per year. Fescue can be established in full sun to shade and should be seeded in spring (mid-March to mid-May) or fall (August to September).

Soil should be prepared for seeding by scarifying, raking, or tilling the soil four to six inches deep to loosen any compaction, allowing for easier seed germination and better water infiltration. Apply seed mix to a damp lot.

Sow seed across the remaining lot by using a seed spreader or by hand. A seed rate of five pounds per 1,000 square feet is recommended. Gently water seedlings daily until they are four to six inches in height. Placing a thin layer of straw or a germination blanket over seeded areas will help ensure that your seed establishes by keeping seeds from blowing away and protecting them from birds. Germination blankets or straw can be purchased at most nurseries and garden stores.

Once established, grass will not require supplemental watering except during unusually dry periods. Eco-Turf Low Maintenance Fescue Mix is one recommended seed mix and can be purchased through the Michigan Wildflower Farm.

Other Field Guide lot designs can be used as groundcovers. Check out the web site for additional options and ideas.



Next Level: If you would like to bring additional color to your grass, you can plant bluebells, crocuses and/or daffodils to create a decorative show in spring. Bulbs should be planted in the fall.

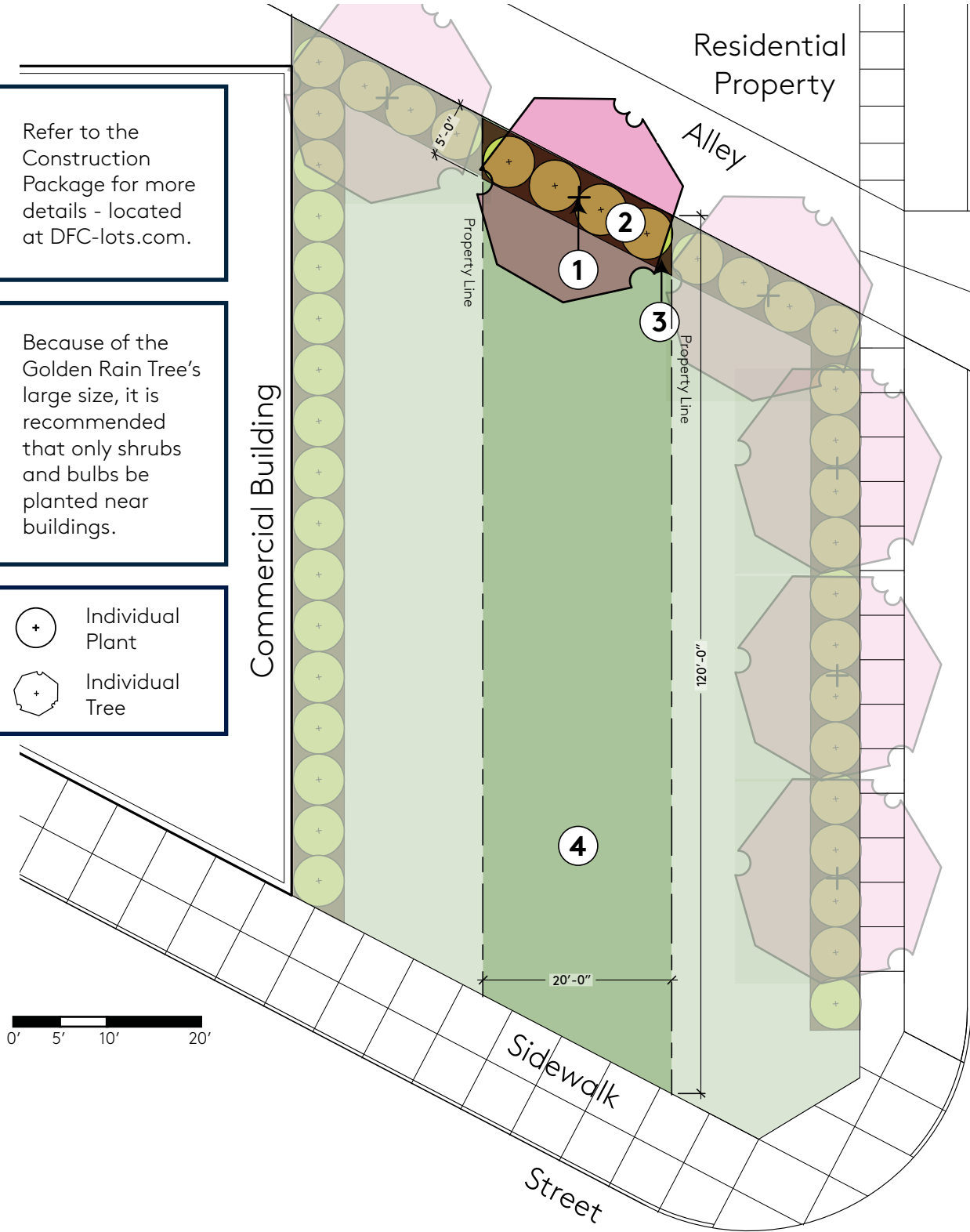
For more guidance on bulb planting refer to the [Bulb Planting Detail](#).

Commercial Curtain Lot Design

Refer to the Construction Package for more details - located at DFC-lots.com.

Because of the Golden Rain Tree's large size, it is recommended that only shrubs and bulbs be planted near buildings.

-  Individual Plant
-  Individual Tree



1 Shrub Hedge (Viburnum)

2 Shade Tree (Golden Rain Tree)

3 Mulch and Daffodils

4 Grass or Optional Groundcover

Planting: Full Sun to Part Sun



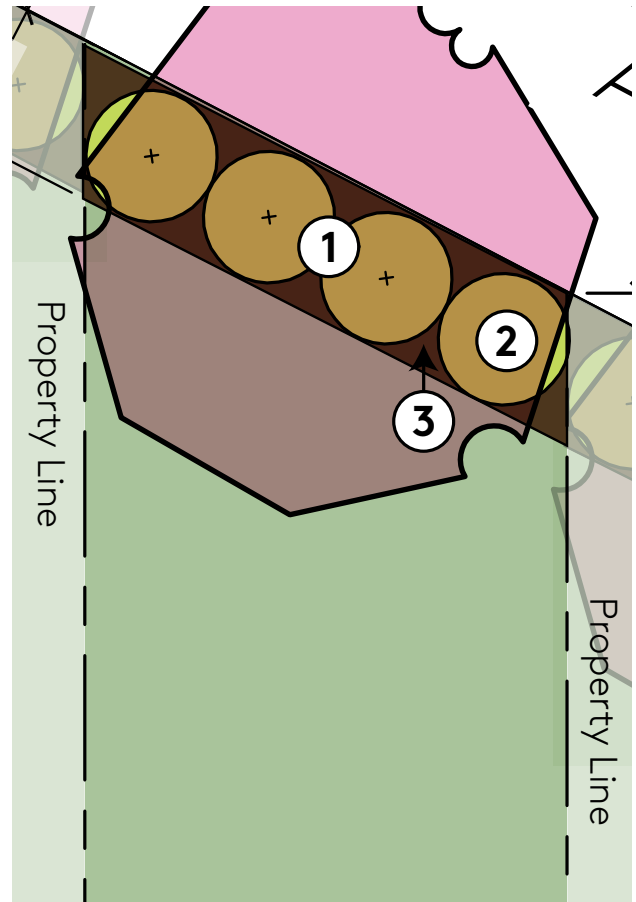
Golden Rain Tree¹
Koelreuteria paniculata
 35' Height x 35' Width.
Quantity: 1 pot or B & B

Fragrant Viburnum²
Viburnum x carlcephalum
 5' Height x 5' Width.
Quantity: 2 pots or B & B





European Cranberry Viburnum³
Viburnum opulus
 5' Height x 5' Width.
Quantity: 2 pots or B & B

Daffodils⁴
Narcissus
 15' Height x 15' Width.
Quantity: 100 bulbs





Plant Sizes

 **Pots:** 1.5 inch diameter trees are available at commercial landscape supply stores in pots or balled and burlapped (B & B).

 **Bulbs:** Bulbs are cheaper if purchased in bulk. You can find bulk bags at garden stores.

Key

 **1 Golden Rain Tree**
 (Space 2.5 feet from alley.)

 **2 Fragrant Viburnum and European Cranberry Viburnum**
 (Space approximately five feet apart.)


 **3 Daffodils** (Plant randomly throughout shrub bed.)

Image Source: 1) Rachel Greenbelt, "Koelreuteria paniculata, Roosevelt Center." 16 June 2014 via Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; 2) "Viburnum opulus A" by Wouter Hagens - Own work. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons 3) "Viburnum opulus 001" by H. Zell - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons; 4) Ian Britton, "Daffodils." 10 April 2010 via Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0

Did You Know?

Professionals Can Help!

The Field Guide to Working With Lots provides a Construction Package for each lot design. The Construction Package includes information and details required for a professional to construct this design. On the Field Guide web site, use the [Construction Package](#) link located near the top of this lot design page to download and print. Your selected professional will then be able to provide a cost estimate and schedule based on the condition of your lot and the design you select.

Want to Hire Locally?

DFC-lots.com has a growing list of Detroit-based professionals and suppliers of landscape materials and services.

Still unsure of where to start?

Call (313) 294-LOTS or email fieldguide@detroitfuturecity.com for assistance.

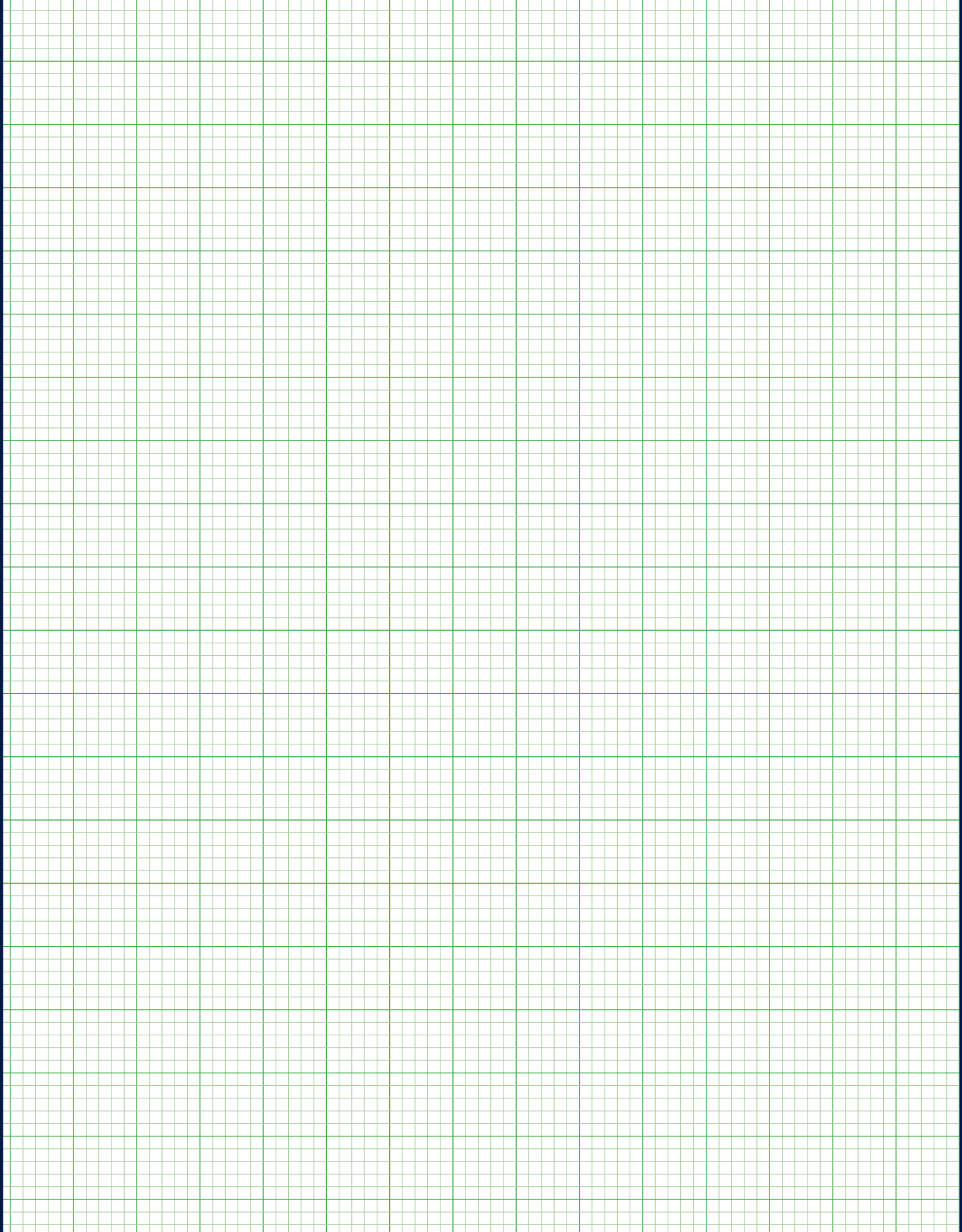
Helpful Facts

- The buffer created by the Commercial Curtain may help reduce illegal dumping on the lot.
- The buffer provides habitat for a variety of birds while screening neighboring properties.
- The selected species recommended for this lot design will flower in the spring and provide nice fall color.
- Mulch conserves water and helps protect trees and plants from mowers.

Planting Tips

- Call ahead to be sure the nursery or garden store has the plants you need for your lot design.
- The best time to plant trees and shrubs is in the spring or fall.
- Do not plant in extreme heat.
- Water after planting and as needed. Do not let plants dry out.
- Remove a shrub from the lot design to create or maintain a pathway through the lot.
- Inspect trees before purchasing to make sure they are healthy and well formed. This will help you select trees that are likely to survive.
- Do not plant trees under overhead wires.

Draw Your Lot





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A FIELD GUIDE

Visit [DFC-lots.com](https://dfc-lots.com)
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Image Source: Acabashi, "Flowering snowball tree (viburnum opulus sterilis)." 04 June 2015 via Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 4.0.