

# HEDGES AND SCREENS

## HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



Hedges and screens are 'living walls' and are currently enjoying a revival as people increasingly seek to protect their privacy while avoiding the monotony of wood or chain-link fencing. Sometimes the two can be used together with the fence securing an area and a row of plants in front to soften it. Alternatively, vines can be grown on a fence to create a hedge-like appearance, add colour and improve the screening value. Excessive winds can be baffled or broken by properly placed hedges or screens and dust and wind-borne debris similarly reduced. Consider using barrier plants to keep people out of areas where you don't want them and guide them to areas where you do. Select barrier plants for their density and sturdiness. Thorny or prickly plants, for example, are ideal barriers. Hedges or screens can also be used in foundation plantings to modify, accentuate or soften architectural lines and shapes. They can provide colour and symmetry or a visual interruption to the monotony of a long brick wall or driveway.

### **FORMAL HEDGES AND SCREENS**

The manicured formal hedge or screen often provides an exquisite finishing touch to a lovely urban garden and offers privacy and seclusion as an added bonus. Formal hedges should be slightly tapered on both sides (see illustration). This helps prevent damage from heavy snow and keeps the hedge full to the base by allowing greater light penetration.



### **INFORMAL HEDGES AND SCREENS**

Associated more with our rural or natural landscape, informal hedges can be extremely attractive and offer the additional advantage of little or no maintenance. Flowering shrubs such as roses, whose blossoms would be lost by pruning, are colourful and ideal for this purpose. Almost any shrub can be used as a hedge but remember to select a variety suitable to the ultimate height you require.



### **EVERGREEN HEDGES AND SCREENS**

Evergreens are extremely valuable for this purpose since they are effective for a full twelve months a year. Additionally, the winter interest of an evergreen dusted with snow is unrivalled in the garden.

### **PLANTING**

Hedging plants are not usually planted in individual holes but rather the hedge line is dug as a trench. Dig it at least 40 cm wide and deep (bigger for larger plants) and incorporate equal parts peat moss and composted manure into the soil. For evergreens, increase amount of peat moss to 3 parts to one part manure. Bare-root plants and small container plants should be spaced 30 cm apart for a full thick hedge. Larger plants can be spaced further apart. Water the new planting thoroughly and fertilize weekly with a transplant fertilizer for the first season.

### **PRUNING AND TRAINING**

Deciduous plants should be cut immediately to an equal height by at least one-third. Evergreens such as cedar should have the tops cut back by at least 10 cm and the sides trimmed lightly.



A deciduous hedge allowed to develop without hard initial pruning. Note the lack of basal shoots.



A deciduous hedge pruned hard at planting. Dense even growth has resulted throughout the hedge.

Following is a partial list of plants commonly used for hedging and screening, although many others may be suitable for your situation.

## **PLANT SELECTION**

### **Prickly or Thorny Plants for Barriers**

<u>Genus</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Sun/Shade</u>
<i>Acanthopanax</i>	Five Leaf Aralia	☉●
<i>Berberis</i>	Barberry	☉
<i>Chaenomeles</i>	Flowering Quince	☉☾
<i>Elaeagnus</i>	Russian Olive	☉
<i>Ilex</i>	Holly	☉☾
<i>Pyracantha</i>	Firethorn	☉☾
<i>Rosa</i>	Rose	☉☾
<i>Picea</i>	Spruce	☉☾
<i>Juniperus</i>	Juniper	☉☾

### **Ideal Plants for Formal Hedges**

<u>Genus</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Sun/Shade</u>
<i>Buxus</i>	Boxwood	☉●
<i>Thuja</i>	Cedar	☉☾
<i>Taxus</i>	Yew	☉●
<i>Euonymus</i>	Euonymus	☉☾●
<i>Juniperus</i>	Juniper	☉☾
<i>Ligustrum</i>	Privet	☉☾
<i>Salix</i>	Blue Arctic Willow	☉
<i>Ribes</i>	Alpine Currant	☉●

### **Ideal Vines for Screening**

<u>Genus</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Sun/Shade</u>
<i>Parthenocissus</i>	Virginia Creeper, Boston Ivy	☉●
<i>Clematis</i>	Clematis	☉☾
<i>Hydrangea</i>	Climbing Hydrangea	☉●
<i>Aristolochia</i>	Dutchman's Pipe	☉●

### **Ideal Plants for Informal Hedges**

<u>Genus</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Sun/Shade</u>
<i>Rosa</i>	Rose	☉●
<i>Spiraea</i>	Spirea	☉●
<i>Cornus</i>	Dogwood	☉●
<i>Syringa</i>	Lilac	☉☾
<i>Forsythia</i>	Forsythia	☉☾
<i>Juniperus</i>	Juniper	☉☾
<i>Viburnum</i>	Snowball	☉●
<i>Sambucus</i>	Elderberry	☉☾

### **Plants for Tall Screens**

<u>Genus</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Sun/Shade</u>
<i>Acer</i>	Maple	☉☾
<i>Fagus</i>	Beech	☉☾
<i>Elaeagnus</i>	Russian Olive	☉
<i>Pinus</i>	Pine	☉☾
<i>Picea</i>	Spruce	☉☾
<i>Thuja</i>	Cedar	☉☾
<i>Tsuga</i>	Hemlock	☉●
<i>Populus</i>	Poplar	☉
<i>Tilia</i>	Linden	☉☾



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