
HEDGES

So, you've got an area that you want to screen out. Your neighbor's junk pile or those neighbors who have their windows at just the perfect level to look at you at all times of the day. Whether for screening or privacy, hedges are a good choice for any homeowner. Hedges are often better looking than a fence or wall, can have some sort of interest during the year, provide shelter for wildlife, and can grow to suit your needs.

What should I look for in a hedge?

Ask yourself these questions to determine your needs-

- How much room can I spare?
Often the limiting factor when it comes to hedge choice, this is really important. Sometimes you may only have a few feet to work with before the hedge is residing in your living room. Keep this in mind, as you can only fit so much in a certain space.
- What am I trying to block?
Do you want a dense screen that blocks everything, or simply something to act as a boundary line? Are you trying to block a view, or just keep people or animals out/in? Is there a sound issue? One note on sound blockage: Larger leaved plants are more efficient at blocking sound than smaller leaved plants.
- How long of an area do I have to cover?
If it's a really long area, and you have the width capacity, you may want to consider going with a plant that spreads a bit more, as this will require fewer plants to cover the same length. For example, it will usually take more arborvitae to cover an area than any other plant. A Leyland cypress would cut the number of plants needed down to about a fifth of the number of arbs needed. Also, if it's a long area, do you want to look at a long expanse of the same thing? You may want to consider mixing the plants in your hedge to make it more interesting.
- Am I looking for a simply functional plant, or does it have to be pretty?
Back fence hedges, or fences way out where no one notices them simply need to be functional. But when you get into a more prominent place, like a front yard or high traffic area, you may want to consider a blooming plant, or something with some sort of interest.

How do I plant a hedge?

For small areas, planting will be the same as with a normal shrub. For long areas/more plants, you may want to dig a trench wide enough for planting, and then set the plants in and backfill. Be sure to find out about the plants' growth habit and size, and determine the recommended spacing to use. Planting the plants too close will result in poor health down the road, so don't fret if it looks sparse to begin with, it'll fill in. Water your hedge deeply and regularly during the first 2-3 years.

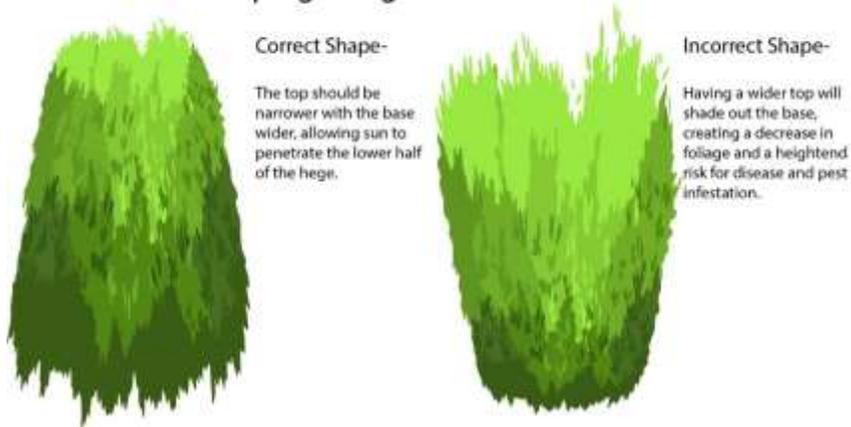
What kinds of plants will work as hedges?

Many plant materials can be used as a hedge. Your choice should be based on your needs and experience. If you are a new gardener, or someone with limited knowledge or time, you will probably want to just use a plant from the list or ask for advice on a commonly used hedge plant. These plants have been proven successful over the years, and should work fine for you. For those of you with a bit more practice and confidence in your green thumb, go ahead and use your imagination. Just because it's not widely used doesn't mean it doesn't work.

What care will maximize the health and lifespan of my hedge?

Water is usually a key issue, especially with longer hedgerows. It is recommended that you run drip irrigation the length of your hedge, so all plants get adequate water. Oftentimes sprinklers will miss some plants, and you won't notice problems until one plant starts to die. Fertilize with a good shrub fertilizer just be sure to follow the directions on the package. Pruning is also very important. Keep on top of it! Too often people will let a hedge go for years with no pruning, and then experience poor results when they decide to finally cut that overgrowth off. This often results in a row of stumps. The trick is to mold your hedge as it grows by yearly pruning. If you even shear a little off a year, your hedge will respond by branching, and become denser and more vivid. When your hedge gets to be the ultimate size you want, keep it there! Yearly shearing will result in a more uniform, denser, healthier, and longer lasting hedge.

Shaping Hedges



Suggested Hedging Material We Commonly Carry Tall – 10' or more

Victoria California Lilac

Ceanothus thrysiflorus 'Victoria'

Zone: 8

Full to part sun

10' x 10' – Plant 8' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 12-24" a year in height

Benefits: Very fast growing with fragrant blue flowers. Easily pruned to be narrower and drought tolerant.

Draw backs: Needs good draining soil. Can be damaged by temperatures less than 10 degrees.

Description: Small dark green glossy leaves. This plant gets covered with small blue flowers in the spring which the bees love. Takes heat and drought well. Would do well on a slope.

Tips: Habit is denser with shearing. It is drought tolerant but it will need water to get established.

Waxleaf Privet

Ligustrum japonicum 'Texanum'

Zone: 7

Full to part sun

10' x 6' – Plant 4-6' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 12" a year in height

Benefits: Easily pruned to be the size and shape you want. Glossy green leaves with fragrant white flowers.

Draw backs: Needs pruning if you want to keep narrow. Not as tall as a conifer tree.

Description: Shiny waxy leaves with fragrant white flowers in the spring followed by black berries. Easy to grow in most soil types and sun exposure.

Tips: Can shear to prune but you will cut leaves in half giving in a less refined look. Pruning individual branches will give better results but takes more time.

Pacific Wax Myrtle

Myrica californica

Zone: 7

Full to part sun

12' x 10', can mature up to 30 x 20' in ideal conditions – Plant 8-10' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 12" a year in height

Benefits: Easily pruned to be the size and shape you want. Salt tolerant. Fixes nitrogen. PNW Native.

Draw backs: Can get quite large with time and does not tolerate cold temperatures well.

Description: Very versatile and easy-care shrub with shiny green leaves and very small black fruit which attracts birds. Tolerates a wide variety of soils. Fast growing and drought tolerant.

Tips: If planted in hot inland area, it will do best with moderate watering during hot spells.

Skip Laurel

Prunus laurocerasus 'Schipkaensis'

Zone: 6

Full to part sun

10' x 8' – Plant 6' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 10-18" a year in height

Benefits: Fast growing without getting too large. Attractive flowers.

Draw backs: Can be hard to prune as branches get thick with age.

Description: Glossy deep green leaves. Racemes of very fragrant white flowers bloom freely and abundantly in spring, attracting butterflies. Red berries ripen black and attract birds.

Tips: Prune individual branches off if needed as leaves look chopped when sheared.

Hicks Yew

Taxus x media 'Hicksii'

Zone: 4

Full to part sun

12' x 4-6' in 10 years- Plant 3-4' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 6-8" a year in height

Benefits: Provided tall screening while still staying more narrow than most trees. Having more width allows you to still get privacy without having to plant as many plants. You can also shear these to keep them more narrow. A great alternative to an Arb hedge for those that want a different look.

Draw backs: Is cone shaped so there is less screening at the top.

Description: A variety bred from our native Western Red Cedar to stay narrow for the smaller average yard.

Rich and dark green in color with a dense habit.

Tips: If pruning, do so each year after the new growth has pushed out. Maintain at the width desired instead of letting it grow out too far and having to prune back harshly.

Emerald Green Arborvitae

Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd'

Zone: 3

Full Sun

15' x 4' – Plant 3-5' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 12" a year in height

Benefits: Stays narrow and dense

Drawbacks: Can not grow in shade or under trees successfully

Description: Often used for a tall hedge that naturally stays narrow. Can be sheared to make look more formal or to keep even more narrow. When shearing it is important to maintain it at the desired height or width. If you

try and cut back more than the first 3-4" you start to see the brown interior. Shearing is best done in the in the spring or early summer on the new growth.

Tips: The larger the plant you start with the more water it will take to get established and Arbs don't bounce back once they've gotten too dry. A simple solution to this is to set up a soaker hose going down the newly planted row both across the front and the back. This way you can water your hedge deeply without water run-off and they get the water they need evenly.

Virescens Western Red Cedar

Thuja plicata 'Virescens'

Zone: 5

Full Sun

30' x 10' – Plant 7' on center for the average hedge

Growth: Average 24" a year in height

Benefits: Provided tall screening while still staying more narrow than most trees. Having more width allows you to still get privacy without having to plant as many plants. You can also shear these to keep them more narrow. A great alternative to an Arb hedge for those that want a different look.

Draw backs: Is cone shaped so there is less screening at the top.

Description: A variety bred from our native Western Red Cedar to stay narrow for the smaller average yard. Rich and dark green in color with a dense habit.

Tips: If pruning, do so each year after the new growth has pushed out. Maintain at the width desired instead of letting it grow out too far and having to prune back harshly.

Leyland Cypress

x Cupressocyparis leylandii

Zone: 5

Full Sun

30' x 25' in 10 years, reaches 60' at maturity – Plant 15' on center for the average hedge, planting less than 10' on center will severely decrease vigor down the road.

Growth: Up to 3' a year in height

Benefits: One of the fastest growing evergreen conifers.

Drawbacks: Gets very large and wide, can look hacked if sheared, and thirstier than other conifer species.

Description: A very vigorous, upright-growing evergreen with a pyramidal form. Tolerant of poor soil, takes pruning well. Likes well-draining soil.

Tips: Be prepared for the size this will reach down the road.

Medium – 6-10'

Camellias

Varieties of *Camellia japonica* and *Camellia sasanqua*

Zone: 6-8

Part sun to shade

~6-10' x 4-7' – Plant 3-5' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 4-6" a year in height

Benefits: A shade loving shrub with beautiful flowers.

Draw backs: Can take some time to get tall.

Description: There are two different types of Camellias, **sasanqua** varieties and **japonica** varieties. Both have shiny dark green leaves with showy flowers. **Sasanqua** varieties tend to bloom in the fall and winter, have smaller leaves, and smaller flowers. The smaller leaves do lend themselves to shearing better, though you can prune both varieties. **Japonica** varieties tend to have larger leaves, large rose like flowers and bloom late winter to spring.

Tips: Prune **japonica** varieties by hand for a more refined look. Both the plant and flowers hold up better planted near a house under an eave.

Silver King, and Golden Euonymus

Euonymus japonica 'Silver King', and *Euonymus japonica 'Aureomarginatus'*

Zone: 6

Full to part sun

6-8' x 4' – Plant 3' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 6-10" a year in height

Benefits: Color year-round. Easy to grow being tolerant of heat and poor soil. Easy to prune.

Draw backs: Can grow in shade but will lose definition in variegation.

Description: Dense upright shrub with colorful leaves. Very easy to grow.

Tips: Remove any reverted stems that appear all green.

Spring Bouquet Viburnum

Viburnum tinus 'Spring Bouquet'

Zone: 7

Full to part sun

6' x 4' – Plant 3' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 8-12" a year in height

Benefits: Year-round interest with dark green leaves, red stems, dark pink buds, white flowers, and metallic blue berries.

Draw backs: Avoid overhead watering as they can get powdery mildew.

Description: Upright growing shrub with many points of interest. These can handle drought as well as sandy soil or heavy clay.

Tips: Use the berried stems in winter arrangements.

Small – 3-6'

Girard's Azalea

Azalea 'Girard's'

Zone: 6

Part sun to shade

4' x 3' – Plant 2' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 2-3" a year in height

Benefits: Shade tolerant and come in a large variety of colors. They make a tidy hedge.

Draw backs: Can burn in hot sun and can be affected by lacebug.

Description: Dense growing with a rounded habit. The entire plant gets covered with blooms in the spring. Leaves sometimes have an attractive red tint in the winter. If left unpruned, these can get 5' h x 4' w over time.

Tips: Prune or shear right after the blooms are done

Dwarf English Boxwood

Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa'

Zone: 5

Full to part sun

4' x 4' – Plant 2-3' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 2-3" a year in height

Benefits: Rounded formal looking habit. Easy care.

Draw backs: Slow growing.

Description: Attractive green leaves with a formal habit even without being pruned. Very easy to grow and often used border flower beds giving them a tidier look.

Tip: Avoid planting in soggy soil.

Heavenly Bamboo

Varieties of *Nandina domestica*

Zone: 6

Full to part sun

2-6' x 2-3' – Plant 18"-2' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 2-8" a year in height

Benefits: Easy care and tolerant of urban conditions. Drought tolerant with multi-seasonal interest.

Draw backs: Tall varieties can get leggy though if you don't like that, just get a compact variety that stays bushy.

Description: Feathery growth with an upright habit and fall colors year-round. Come in a variety of shapes and sizes so you can find one to fit your needs perfectly.

Tips: Fits well in a NW style garden with rocks and evergreens.

Prelude Pieris

Pieris japonica 'Prelude'

Zone: 5

Full to part sun

3' x 3' – Plant 2' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 2-3" a year in height

Benefits: Both shade and sun tolerant. Compact rounded habit with white blooms and red new growth.

Draw backs: Slow growing.

Description: Dense growing with a formal appearance. White flowers have some fragrance and bloom after other pieris are done.

Tips: Blooms and new growth are slow to appear so be patient. This does very well under a Japanese maple or other shade tree.

Chestnut Hill Laurel

Prunus laurocerasus 'Chestnut Hill'

Zone: 6

Full to part sun

4' x 4' – Plant 3' on center for the average hedge

Growth: 2-6" a year in height

Benefits: More compact selection of cherry laurel but with same handsome form and characteristics.

Draw backs: Slow growing.

Description: Compact habit with racemes of very fragrant white flowers. Red berries ripen black. Takes pruning very well.

Tips: Prune after flowering in spring.