

# Hedging, an introduction.

Hedging has been used for thousands of years to enclose areas and mark boundaries. Today they are used as an ornamental feature of a garden whilst still performing a practical use.

A hedge can be a great addition to your garden. Firstly, they add an attractive border to your property that is softer in the landscape than say a fence or wall. They also provide a sound barrier from neighbouring roads or the neighbours themselves! Thirdly, a hedge will provide a great habitat where birds can safely nest away from predators as well as supporting an abundance of other wildlife.

It's surprising just how many types of plants you can use for a hedge and listed here are plants commonly used for hedges, along with some not so common but will make for an interesting contrast in your yard.

The heights given in this guide are the maximum height the plant will grow un-pruned. It is of course usual to keep a hedge confined to the size you require it in your garden. Also listed is the growth rate in which you will expect it to mature at and also the minimum width you should expect to be able to keep it at, as some plants require more room than others.

## Establishing a Hedge

Proper planning and preparation is essential in creating an attractive and long-lived hedge. Planting and spacing the plants correctly will give it the best chance of establishing successfully. A hedge is technically the simplest form of topiary, so bearing that in mind there will be at least some amount of maintenance required each year.

When planting your hedge it is always best to bring in some fresh soil or compost for planting in combination with bone meal. Incorporating rich organic matter (Sea soil, compost etc.) with the bone meal will allow the roots to establish more quickly and reduce the stress on the new plants. Mixing the new soil with native soil already present is also recommended to reduce stress.

Depending on your requirements and the amount of space available, you may want to plant a single row of plants for your hedge or a double, staggered row. The latter will provide you with a much more stronger and resilient hedge in the long term and is also the better option if you want your hedge to act as a sound barrier. This option will inevitably take up more room width ways so is not always convenient in smaller lots. As long as a hedge is kept trimmed properly, a single row is normally sufficient.

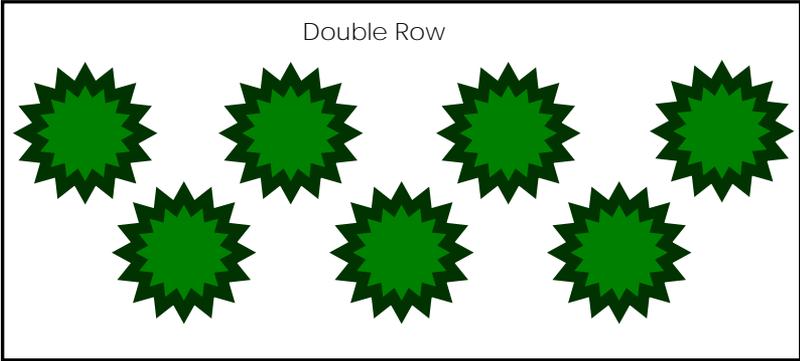
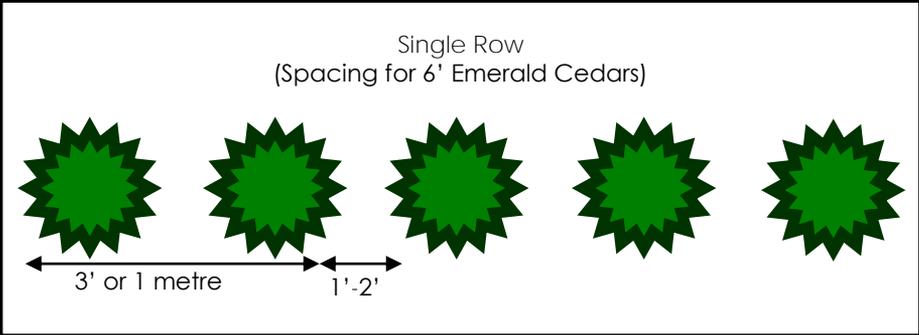
With our ever more common periods of hot and dry weather during the summer months, it is highly recommended to install some method of irrigation. In its simplest form this can be a soaker hose attached to an outside tap or for larger projects it may be worth considering an irrigation system controlled by a timer. Watering

when establishing a hedge is best done less frequently but for longer, this encourages the water to penetrate deeper and therefore encouraging the roots to travel deeper too.

## Spacing

Spacing of plants depends on what size you buy them at. When looking at a plant we usually recommend leaving at least 1-2 feet between the widest parts of the plant. For example a 6' cedar will usually be spaced at 2 per linear metre or 3'. Therefore you would calculate this by taking your total length and then dividing it by 1.5 to get the total number of plants needed. If you want your hedge to be taller, such as 9 feet or more, you should space your plants further up to 3' apart so that they have room to mature to that size. Adding a couple of extra will take care of each end of the hedge.

Our customer service staff can further advise you on the number of plants you may need depending on your requirements.



# Yew



*Taxus species*

*Full shade to full sun*

*Slow growth*

Yew or Taxus are a great group of plants that are incredibly shade tolerant as well as withstanding full sun. There are a few main varieties used for hedging. Hicks Yew, Hills Yew and H.M. Eddie, all are very similar once established. H.M. Eddie is a male plant so it won't produce the red berries some people enjoy for colour and wildlife. The seeds within the berries are poisonous so this should be taken into consideration regarding young children. Once established yew are particularly drought tolerant, which is why people are now choosing yew over a traditional cedar hedge. Vigilant watering during the summer months is still needed for the first few years of establishment.

Yews can grow up to 20' tall when mature however they are considered a slow growing plant. They can be comfortably kept at any height from 5-12'. The minimum width for yew is around 3' for a single line row. For establishing a new hedge, plants that are already around 4-5' you will need one for every 3' of hedge.

# Laurels



## English Laurel

*Prunus laurocerasus*

*Full shade to full sun*

*Fast growth*

English Laurel makes a great hedge in areas with both low light and full sun. They feature bright glossy green leaves that give a lush feel to a garden. White flowers in spring are attractive to bees and other pollinators and will mature to black cherry like fruit, which is why another name for this plant is the cherry laurel.

English laurel is a fast growing plant and will need trimming twice a year if you are after a more manicured look. It requires moist but well drained soil and will need irrigating during drier periods. Applying an evergreen fertilizer, such as Home &

Garden Excellence Evergreen at the beginning of the season will keep the plant lush and green.

English Laurel can be kept around 5' comfortably but will easily provide a hedge to 12' and upwards. It also has to have a width no narrower than 3'-4' in order to keep its bushy, lush appearance.



## Portuguese Laurel

*Prunus lusitanica*

*Part sun to part shade*

*Moderate growth*

Portuguese laurel make a neat and compact hedge with leaves much smaller than it's English cousin. Its leaves are darker in colour and contrast nicely with the new shoots that appear red. Portuguese laurel is not as fast growing as English laurel, so less demanding when it comes to maintenance. It also features clusters of white flower that mature to black berries if the plant is not pruned.

Recommended for part shade or full sun, this plant can provide a hedge up to 15' or as low as 3 feet, minimum width 2'-3'. Soil should be well drained as ground that remains waterlogged for extended periods are not recommended. Heavy clay soils should be amended or given drainage.



## Photinia

*Photinia x fraseri*

*Full shade to full sun*

*Moderate growth*

Photinia is a large shrub that is commonly found in gardens as a specimen shrub, however it also lends itself to creating a great hedge. The red tips on new growth can brighten the garden where a screen is needed. It is tolerant of shade and full sun, however if the area is particularly dry, care should be taken during the summer to allow sufficient watering.

Pruning of this plant should be left until after the new red growth develops so that it can be appreciated, usually midsummer or wait until early fall.

Photinia can grow up to 15' tall, however a great hedge can be had from anywhere between 5'-10'. Naturally being a wide plant, the minimum width for Photinia will be around 4'.

# Holly

*Ilex species*

*Full shade to full sun*

*Moderate growth*

The most common Holly is English Holly or *Ilex aquifolium*. Hollies come in a variety of leaf shapes and colours from deep green to creamy white or gold variegation. Blue Holly (*Ilex meservae*) has bluish green leaves with purplish new stems. Chinese Holly (*Ilex cornuta*) has glossy green leaves but with less spikes than English Holly, which is preferred by some gardeners. Chinese holly can also produce berries without the presence of a male plant. This is not the case for the majority of hollies as both a male and female plant is required for berry production, one male in the garden will be sufficient.



Hollies are very tolerant of shade, often found in the under story of woodlands however the more light they have, the more impressive the show of berries will be in the fall. English holly can grow upwards of 20' where the Blue Holly will grow up to 15'. Most hollies can be kept to what size you want and will provide a very hardy and robust hedge for many years.



# Sweetbox

*Sarcococca ruscifolia*

*Full shade to part sun*

*Moderate Growth*

There are two kinds of Sweetbox commonly used in the garden. *Sarcococca ruscifolia* is taller one of the two and this combined with shade tolerance is why it is used as an informal hedge in shaded gardens.



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It has small, dark green oval leaves on arching stems. Its small white flowers produce an abundance of sweet smelling perfume in late winter to early spring. This plant can be used to separate beds in the garden or as a low hedge where a boundary is needed but not necessarily a full privacy screen. *Sarcococca ruscifolia* can grow up to 4' tall by 4' wide.

## Japanese Box Holly



*Ilex Crenata*

*Slow growing*

*Full shade to full sun*

This kind of holly looks very similar to boxwood in both its habit and colour. Its leaves are small and rounded and hold on to their dark green colour much better than boxwood during the winter. It is slow growing and hardy, making it ideal for smaller hedges, although it can be left to grow to its natural height of 6' or more. Japanese holly is not susceptible to boxwood blight and is tolerant of most soil, handling full shade to full sun. Can produce small black berries if not pruned too early.



## False Holly

*Osmanthus heterophyllus*

*Moderate growth*

*Full shade to part sun*

This dense and bushy shrub lends itself well to a smaller hedge, as its name implies it looks very much like a holly but its spiky leaves are far softer.

It is available in a number of different varieties. '**Goshiki**' has beautiful variegated leaves that look like they have been splashed with cream spots on rich green. It is best used as a small to medium sized hedge around 4-5'. It can be kept quite narrow so only needs a couple of feet of width. Prune it once or twice a year depending on how manicured you prefer it to look.

Being both tolerant of clay and drought once established means this plant is pretty tough. It is best in a location where it is shaded from the extreme afternoon heat during summer months.



## Cedars

There are a number of plants used for hedging that are commonly referred to as cedars. These include a few that are native to our part of the world, meaning they are one of the better options for a hardy and long lasting hedge.

One misconception regarding the common hedging plant, the Emerald Green Cedar or '**Smaragd**', is that it is not hardy when it comes to summer drought. People's loss of hedges due to the dry weather is not because

of the plant itself but due to incorrect watering during establishment. It is important to install a soaker around the base of the new hedge so that you can leave the water running for a number of hours a few times a week. This is better than watering them by hand for only a few minutes every day.

Watering for longer but less often encourages a deeper root system, which will allow the hedge to better combat drought during the summer months. Mulching around the base of the hedge will also help with water retention in addition to incorporating fresh organic matter into the soil.

## Emerald Green Cedar

***Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd'***

*Moderate growth*

*Full sun to part shade*

The Emerald Green Cedar is a narrow growing evergreen conifer that can reach heights in the garden up to 15 feet tall and 4 feet wide. It can be kept trimmed to lower heights if required, this will allow it to establish a sturdier



framework that can withstand snow accumulation much better. It is always recommended however to knock off snow during the winter to prevent damage to branches. This cedar is the most common choice for hedge in our area being easily maintained for even the smallest yard. It can handle full sun to part shade, planting it in the hottest locations will require extra care when it comes to irrigating. Shadier locations will mean the foliage will not be as thick and full. Minimal maintenance required.



## Pyramid Cedar

***Thuja occidentalis 'Pyramidalis'***

*Fast growth*

*Full sun to part shade*

The Pyramid Cedar grows faster than the Emerald Cedar, reaching heights up to 25' tall when happy. It has a bushier look to it than the emerald cedar but is still considered narrow. It

requires minimal shearing to maintain its shape and is also suitable for smaller yards if width is an issue. When established it is fairly drought tolerant.

## 'Excelsa' Western Red Cedar

### *Thuja plicata 'Excelsa'*

*Fast growth*

*Full sun to shade*

This is a cultivated form of the native Western Red Cedar, reaching 35-40 feet tall and 15 feet wide. If sheared this cedar can create a very thick, dense hedge that is perfect for creating a sound barrier. It is tolerant of most sites and soil types becoming drought tolerant with age. It will grow equally well when used as a large barrier in open countryside or as a privacy screen in urban environments. Prune once or twice a year depending on the tightness required.



## 'Green Giant' Western Red Cedar

### *Thuja standishii x plicata 'Green Giant'*

*Fast growth*

*Full sun to shade*



or twice per season.

The Green Giant Western Red Cedar is a tighter form of the native western red. Fast growing to 25-30' tall and 8-10' wide, this lush green variety acts well as a large windbreak as well as a dense privacy screen. It retains its rich colour throughout the winter and does not yellow in the colder weather. Can be kept smaller with pruning once

## Sunkist/ Yellow Ribbon Cedar

### *Thuja occidentalis 'Sunkist'/'Yellow Ribbon'*

*Slow growth*

*Full sun to part shade*

Both of these cedars will add a splash of gold to the yard, requiring little maintenance. Both varieties grow to a similar height of 6 to 10 feet tall and 5 feet wide. The more sun they receive, the more vibrant the colour.





## Degroots Spire Cedar

*Thuja occidentalis 'Degroots Spire'*

*Slow growth*

*Sun to part shade*

This slow growing cedar is very narrow and upright, making it suitable for planting in tight spaces. It can be trimmed skinnier to fit in areas where some cedars may become too wide. Growing slowly to 20' tall and 4' wide, it prefers dappled shade in drier locations meaning a moist, well

drained soil is preferred.

## Leyland Cypress

*x Cupressocyparis leylandii*

*Fast growth*

*Full sun to part shade*

The Leyland cypress or Leylandii is a very fast growing evergreen, which makes a great hedge, suitable for many uses. Kept trimmed it makes a very dense deep green hedge, able to withstand high amounts of urban pollution. Left to grow by itself it will grow very fast and tall to provide a large windbreak or barrier in rural locations. Due to its rapid growth it is best pruned at least once a year, or twice to keep it looking tight. In ten years it will reach 20 to 30 feet tall and at maturity 50 feet tall by 20 feet wide. Do not let its height cause concern as it can be easily kept at a height of 6 feet if required. This plant is not suitable for colder areas and we would not recommend using it anywhere further east in the Fraser Valley than Abbotsford. Commonly used in Europe as a fast establishing hedge.



# Boxwood

*Buxus* cvs.

Slow growing

Full sun to part shade



Boxwood has been used as both a hedging plant and ornamental shrub for centuries. A common misconception is that boxwood is a very small growing plant; common boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) can actually reach mature heights of around 30 feet tall and wide. It is however commonly associated with tightly clipped low hedges and topiaries in formal European gardens. Its ability to be kept small and narrow has meant it has been used as a small hedge or boundary marker in many gardens around the world. There are many types of boxwood, the main differences between varieties are leaf shape, mature height, form and winter colour.

In order to keep boxwood lush and tight you are best clipping it at least twice a year. Try to avoid trimming during the excessive summer heat or during the winter when there is the threat of frost. This can cause unsightly leaf scaring on the plant and affect its overall beauty. If your boxwood is situated in an area that is exposed to sun and cold winds during the winter, it can turn an orange/bronze colour. This is quite typical and will revert back to its lush green once growth starts again in the spring and is nothing to worry about. If you want to reduce this issue, planting them in part shade will help. If you are growing a hedge we always recommend you buy a few extra plants and place them elsewhere in your garden, this will allow you to replace them if one dies, guaranteeing the right match of boxwood.

Boxwood blight is a fungal disease that can cause the eventual death of the plant, to reduce this issue we recommend you plant the hedge in an area that has good air circulation. It is also best to avoid varieties such as Dwarf English Boxwood, *Buxus sempervirens* 'Sufruticosa'. Thinning out of growth within the structure of the boxwood will also allow better air circulation and therefore decrease the chance of this disease.

| Name              | Leaf shape/<br>Colour       | Habit               | Height | Spread | Resists bronzing<br>in winter? |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Common            | Oval/ glossy green          | Rounded,<br>bushy   | 30'    | 30'    | No                             |
| Green<br>Mountain | Oval, deep green            | Upright,<br>conical | 5'     | 3'     | Yes                            |
| Green<br>Velvet   | Oval/ oblong, deep<br>green | Dense,<br>bushy     | 4'     | 4'     | Yes                            |
| Green Gem         | Narrow oval                 | Compact,<br>dense   | 3-4'   | 3-4'   | Partially                      |
| Winter Gem        | Oval, glossy green          | Rounded,<br>bushy   | 3-4'   | 3-4'   | No                             |
| Graham<br>Blandy  | Oval, deep green            | Narrow,<br>upright  | 10'    | 4'     | No                             |
| Variegated        | Oval, cream/ green          | Upright,<br>bushy   | 5-8'   | 5-8'   | Partially                      |

# Boxwood Overview

## Euonymus

*Euonymus japonicus* cvs.

Fast growing

Full sun to part shade



There are many types of Euonymus suitable for making a smaller hedge in the garden. Two colourful varieties are '**Aureomarginata**', meaning gold margins and '**Silver King**' which has deep green leaves with creamy edges. Both can provide an evergreen hedge up to 5 feet tall and be kept a couple of feet wide, a thicker hedge can be created by planting a staggered, double row. These varieties of Euonymus are quick to establish and require a prune once or twice a year. During hotter periods you will need to monitor the watering as newer growth can wilt during drought. Colder winters can cause the plant to drop its leaves, however they will flush out again the following spring. Not recommended for planting east of Chilliwack due to cold tolerance.



## Japanese Waxleaf Privet

*Ligustrum japonicum* '**Texanum**'

Fast growing

Full sun to part shade



Privet is a very popular choice of plant for hedging in Europe. With its glossy deep green foliage, quick growth and perfumed white flowers, it's not difficult to see why. There are a few different varieties that can be used to create a wonderful looking hedge. We sometimes stock other varieties so please talk to one of our staff for current availability.

Japanese Waxleaf Privet has the largest leaves within the privet family; new growth is bright and glossy and has large panicles of creamy white flowers that bare a sweet smell. Left un-pruned this variety can reach 8 to 10 feet tall and 4 to 6 feet wide. Due to its speedy growth it is best trimmed twice a year and recommended you use hand shears as trimming with powered shears can mean damaged leaves left on the plant which some consider unsightly. We would not recommend using

this in areas with cold prevailing winds in the winter or areas east of Abbotsford due to cold tolerance.

## California Lilac

***Ceanothus thyrsiflorus* 'Victoria'**

*Fast growing*

*Full sun to part shade*



*Ceanothus* 'Victoria' is a wonderful plant to use as a smaller hedge, its small deep green leaves and clusters of heavily perfumed baby blue flowers add much interest in late spring and early summer. Its flowers are a great attractant for pollinators too, helping encourage wildlife into your garden. It can grow up to 9 feet tall and 10 feet wide naturally but in our climate it is best kept around 3 to 5 feet tall and around 3 feet wide. Planted in coastal regions it can withstand salt spray and strong winds. It is not for planting east of Langley or areas with poor drainage. Trim after flowering to encourage a second flush, do not trim before flowering otherwise you will cut off the stems that flower.



For a further splash of colour, try using the variety 'Gold Brian' with its golden variegated leaves.

## Silverberry

*Elaeagnus*

***pungens* 'Fruilandii'**

*Elaeagnus ebbingei*

*Fast growth*

*Full sun to part shade*



*Elaeagnus* is a fast growing shrub with bluish green leaves that have a silvery sheen to them. This enables them to deal with salt laden winds if planted near to the coast. It also means they are drought tolerant when established. They prefer well draining soil so planting in areas of clay should be avoided. They feature small creamy flowers, which although are not for show, give out a very sweet perfume. *Elaeagnus* can handle relatively shady conditions as well as full sun, it requires a least 3 feet width and can provide a solid hedge up to 7 feet tall. Shear once or twice a year.



The variety **'Gilt Edge'** is worthy of its place in the garden owing to its bright gold and green variegated leaves. Hardy to zone 6, it will grow well in most places within our area.

## Non-Evergreen Hedging

Deciduous means non-evergreen, in that it will lose its leaves for the winter. Although some people find this undesirable it does open up options for more colours and textures. Deciduous plants are usually harder than evergreen options and are less prone to damage caused by snow and ice, something to consider if you live in an area with higher snowfall.

### Barberry

*Berberis thunbergii* cvs.

*Moderate to fast growth*

*Full sun to part shade*

There are several varieties of barberry suitable for a smaller hedge in beautiful deep purples or bright greens. Barberry is very tough and hardy and will provide a long-lived hedge with vibrant colour. Purple leaved varieties will give you flaming red fall colour whilst green ones will turn bright yellow. Once established, Barberry are well suited to dry conditions.



**'Royal Cloak'** (pictured) is ideal for growing up to 4 to 5 feet tall, while the smaller **'Royal Burgundy'** will grow to 2 feet. **'Rose Glow'** has deep maroon leaves with splashes of cream and pink, this will grow up to 4 to 5 feet. Bare stems in winter display small bright red berries.

**'Emerald Carousel'** and **'William Penn'** are great green leaved varieties which will grow to 4' tall, the latter being a great barrier plant with its spikes. **'Sunsation'** is a wonderfully bright variety perfect for a smaller hedge to 3-4 feet.

### Forsythia

*Forsythia x intermedia*

*Fast growth*

*Full sun to part shade*



Forsythia is a fast growing shrub with dark green leaves. It is used in the garden for its sulphur yellow flowers that are a welcome sight to the late winter garden. Forsythia is hardy and able to withstand a certain amount of drought once established. It will grow quickly up to 8 feet tall and if pruned well whilst establishing will grow thick and sturdy.

## Burning Bush

*Euonymus alatus*

*Moderate growth*

*Full sun to shade*



corked wings can be appreciated.

Burning bush is named due to its flaming red fall colour that ignites the garden. When planted en-masse or used as a hedge this injection of colour looks very impressive. It can be used in full sun to shade, however shadier conditions will usually be at the expense of good fall colour. The variety '**Compactus**' will grow moderately to 9 to 11 feet tall but can be kept shorter by shearing. Fireball is another great option, growing only 5-7' tall. When it has dropped its leaves its interesting stems with